GRASSROOTS COMMUNITY PEACEBUILDING IN LUNENBURG COUNTY, NOVA SCOTIA, CANADA: Identifying Local Perceptions of the Causes of and Means of Preventing Interpersonal Violence

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Abstract

The term 'global peacelessness' is used to describe the impact of persistently high rates of interpersonal violence throughout the world, and particularly violence against women (Flaherty, 2010). This violence is epidemic and constitutes a global health problem and pervasive human rights violation. Responses are critiqued as narrow in scope, reactive and lacking in coordination. The research presented in this thesis contributes to addressing this gap by exploring measures community citizens from diverse backgrounds defined as important to ending violence. Specifically, the research question asked 'What do community members of Lunenburg County say about the structural and cultural influences on interpersonal violence?' It links the field of peace studies with the interpersonal anti-violence field and the field of addiction. The meta-analysis that frames this dissertation asserts that grassroots community peacebuilding will involve defining and connecting measures at the local level that can lead to defining and challenging broad, oppressive cultural and structural factors linked to the persistence of violence at provincial, national, and international levels. Situating interpersonal violence within a peacebuilding framework provides a critical lens that moves from a narrow focus on individual responsibility to include a wider analysis of the origins of violence to include social, cultural, economic, and political factors and ultimately compel a collective community response. This emancipatory function of peacebuilding must include a focus on promotion of environments where boys and men, girls and women, can live safe and satisfying lives that include the development of skills that promote non-violence and peace.

Keywords: Peacebuilding, Women, Interpersonal Violence, Social Healing, Neoliberalism, Dislocation, Addiction, Culture

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Chapter One:

Introduction

Overview

This thesis explores the transformative possibilities of framing responses to persistent and high rates of interpersonal violence as grassroots community-based peacebuilding. Specifically, the research question asked 'What do community members of Lunenburg County say about the structural and cultural influences on interpersonal violence?' As such, the work presented here links the field of peace studies with the interpersonal anti-violence field. This thesis links these two fields and the topic substance abuse/addiction.

The term 'global peacelessness' has been used to describe the impact of persistently high rates of interpersonal violence throughout the world, and particularly violence against women (Flaherty, 2010). Interpersonal violence and specifically men's violence against girls and women is a global health problem of epidemic proportions (World Health Organization, 2013). The World Health Organization (2013) reported that physical or sexual violence is experienced by more than one third of women globally. In Canada, research indicates that as many as half of Canadian women experience violence at some time in their lives (Johnson 2005). Kristof & Wudunn (2009) describe achieving gender equity and ending men's violence against girls and women as the moral challenge of the twenty-first century. Former American president Jimmy Carter (2014) has described the deprivation and abuse of women and girls as the most serious and unaddressed challenge worldwide. According to Kofi Annan (1999), the seventh secretary general of the United Nations,

violence against women is perhaps the most shameful and pervasive human rights violation. He, along with many others who continue to struggle toward an end to all forms of interpersonal violence and specifically violence against women and girls, affirm that as long as this violence continues we cannot claim to be making real progress towards equality, development, and peace (Heise, et al.1999).

However, while interpersonal violence and specifically men's violence against girls and women has been described as a global health problem, an outstanding challenge for this century, and a pervasive human rights violation, responses have been critiqued as narrow in scope, reactive, and lacking in coordination (Flaherty, 2010; Wells, 2012).

The literature indicates that little is known about effective primary prevention strategies (Wells, et al. 2012). This is the result of a lack of focus on the prevention of interpersonal violence, which includes sexual violence and domestic violence, incomplete information on risk factors, and the lack of adequately evaluated programs and interventions (Moloughney, 2007). Therefore, more research is needed to learn about what communities can do to prevent all forms of interpersonal violence. The research presented here contributes to addressing this gap by exploring what citizens from diverse backgrounds identify as cultural and structural influences on interpersonal violence and measures they believe are important to define a community response.

Applying a peacebuilding framework to this issue is an innovative way to conceptualize this violence and points to unique conflict transformation approaches. Many researchers, including Curle, 1971; Boulding, 1977;

1995; Lederach, 2003; Mitchels, 2005; Schirch, 2008 Galtung, 2010; Lederach & Lederach, 2010; Ramsbotham et al. 2011 and have written about the beneficial aspects of radical grassroots community peacbuilding. While Schirch (2008) has described the goals of peacebuilding as preventing further violence and helping people recover, returning to the more radical roots of peacebuilding speaks to an emancipatory function through the promotion of environments in which all people can live full lives and explore their full potential (Curle,1995; Mitchels, 2006; Galtung & Webel, 2007; Lederach & Lederach, 2010). This thesis is based on the belief that this emancipatory function of peacebuilding is relevant to all communities throughout the world that experience interpersonal violence and must include a focus on promotion of environments where boys and men, girls and women, can live safe and satisfying lives that include the development of skills that promote non-violence and peace.

The meta-analysis that frames this thesis asserts that grassroots community peacebuilding will involve defining and connecting measures at the local level that can lead to defining and challenging broad, oppressive cultural and structural factors linked to the persistence of violence at provincial, national, and international levels (Curle, 1971, 1995; Galtung, 1990, 1995; Melander, 2005; Mitchels, 2006; Heathershaw, 2007; Schirch, 2008; Flaherty, 2010; Lederach & Lederach, 2010; Ramsbotham et al. 2011). I argue throughout this thesis that many of the cultural and structural factors that influence the lived experiences of citizens in local communities are determined outside the community. Due to the explosion of access to the worldwide web, information can be exchanged quickly and privately. The

variety of social media and online information and entertainment available to children, youth and adults is often mediated by globalized structures that are supported by governments influenced by neoliberal values (Alexander, 2008; Gill, 2008; Giroux, 2014; Haydock, 2014; Mellows, 2013). This thesis will highlight the ways in which these values can conflict with the goals of a social justice and peacebuilding mandate. Work at the community level can appear very daunting when confronted by the need to regulate the influence of such powerful factors on children, youth, and adults. Consequently, I explore the concept of agency in relation to opportunities for community citizens to define and influence change within their community.

Throughout this thesis, I critique neoliberalism and postfeminist theories that suggest agency is exercised by making informed and healthy individual choices and thereby avoid a politicized analysis of social contexts (Gill, 2008; O'Neill, 2015). According to these theories, the individual is responsible for minimizing personal risk (Scourfield & Welsh, 2002; Liebenberg, Ungar & Ikeda, 2013; Lupton, 2005; Gillingham, 2006; Swadener, 2010). I profile literature that critiques this discourse of risk and individual 'responsibilisation' as obscuring and negating the social reality of oppression in all its forms, including poverty, sexism, racism, ableism, homophobia, and transphobia, to name a few. I argue that a feminist critique of the discourse of risk and neoliberal and postfeminist views of agency concludes that these ideas fail to recognize power dynamics and sexual politics (McRobbie, 2009; O'Neill, 2015).

Incorporating Galtung's (1976; 1996; 2010) recognition that direct violence is linked to cultural and structural violence focuses attention on the

existence of oppressive cultural and structural factors that impact men and women's choices and ability to influence change. Throughout this thesis, I champion the idea that communities, that is the social, political, and environmental conditions within which children and youth are raised, exert great influence on the development of individuals (Alexander, 2008; Gill, 2008; McGibbon, 2012; McRobbie, 2009; O'Neill, 2015). Communities can create a sense of safety and belonging and/or a sense of alienation and disconnection that can contribute to substance abuse and/or addiction and violence (ibid).

Definitions

Measuring rates of violence is complex and challenging in part because there are many terms that refer to various forms of interpersonal violence. This is compounded by the realization that new forms of interpersonal violence have emerged with the proliferation of the internet that can include, for example, forms of cyberbullying.

The term interpersonal violence has been defined as the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against another person or against a group or community that results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation (Dahlberg & Krug, 2002). This broad definition of violence is gender neutral and therefore relevant to all members of the population. It acknowledges that childhood trauma can be from violence by adult males and females towards children. It also acknowledges that men can be violent towards other men as well as to women and that women can also be violent towards other women and to men. Conversely, this term has been critiqued for these

same attributes by its failure to incorporate a gendered lens and to specify form and severity of violent experiences. While appreciating these limitations, I use this term most often throughout this text in recognition that community peacebuilding efforts target all members of the community and all forms of interpersonal violence. However, the violence most commonly addressed throughout this thesis is violence committed by men against women.

Sinha (2013) acknowledges the scope and definition of violence against women varies widely, ranging from definitions related to specific forms of violence against women to the more inclusive definition adopted by the United Nations (UN) that is used by Statistics Canada. The 1993 UN *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women* has defined violence against women as:

> *"any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life"* (UN 1993).

This internationally accepted definition encompasses all forms of violence against women and includes the wide array of violence perpetrated in both the public and private spheres of women's lives.

The Research Question

My central research question explores 'What do community members say about the structural and cultural influences on interpersonal violence?' Lederach (2003: 14) defines conflict transformation as a process that involves envisioning and responding "to the ebb and flow of social conflict as life-giving opportunities for creating constructive change processes that

reduce violence, increase justice in direct interaction and social structures, and respond to real-life problems in human relationships". This thesis asserts that all forms of interpersonal violence against all genders impact the community life of everyone and, as such, demand a community response. Community citizens who are engaged in this issue must define community responses to the structural and cultural factors that influence interpersonal violence in their efforts to reduce all forms of violence.

I address this research question through semi-structured interviews based on a grassroots community-based framework, the architecture of which rests on Galtung's (1976; 1996; 2010) assertion that direct violence is linked to cultural and structural violence. My work with the *Be the Peace Make a Change* project, funded by the Status of Women Canada (2012-2015) to the Second Story Women's Center in Lunenburg involved coordinating a community response to violence against women and contributed to my interest in this area. Some of the research participants had been involved in the project. However, evaluation of this project was not part of this thesis. Thirty-four interviews were conducted with individuals who live in Lunenburg County, Nova Scotia and further detail regarding those interviewed and the *Be the Peace Make a Change Project* is included in Chapter Two.

Situating men's violence against women within a peacebuilding framework provides a critical lens that broadens understandings of the origins of violence to include social, cultural, economic, and political factors.

The remainder of this Introduction briefly outlines how each chapter of this thesis explores the central research question and contributes to the

literature on peacebuilding, interpersonal violence, and substance abuse.

Chapter Two: The Case Study

Chapter Two profiles the case study, Lunenburg County, Nova Scotia, Canada. I chose Lunenburg County to focus on my home community and to demonstrate the applicability of a community peacebuilding framework. As implied by a grassroots community approach to research and peace studies, the wisdom of local community members is profiled. The introduction to Lunenburg County in Chapter Two includes a brief history and geographic and demographic information. The scenic beauty and other positive traits are acknowledged as well as the 'rurality' which characterizes much of the county. Chapter Two also presents information regarding the rates of interpersonal violence that occur within the county. Definitive numbers regarding incidences of violence are difficult to obtain and this chapter acknowledges the 'hidden nature' of such crimes in Lunenburg County and globally (WHO, 2010). Past and current efforts to reduce all forms of interpersonal violence and particularly violence against women in Lunenburg County are also acknowledged and explored. As noted above, these efforts have been continually challenged by a lack of resources, lack of sustained and ongoing coordination, and a limited ability to focus on proactive and preventative measures (Flaherty, 2010). The scope and growth of cyber bullying is also discussed in relation to difficulties in obtaining accurate information about the amount of violence that occurs, its 'hidden nature', and the difficulty of defining what constitutes violent acts.

Chapter Three: Literature Review

Chapter Three highlights intersections among three bodies of literature: (1) peace studies and conflict resolution; (2) the interpersonal anti-violence field and (3) the substance abuse and addiction field. These intersections are important to the larger arguments made in this thesis, including recognition that substance abuse and high rates of addiction quickly multiply in contexts that promote violence and, as such, are risk factors that contribute to violence. The literature reviewed in Chapter Three discusses 'positive peace' as not only including efforts to reduce violence, but also as ultimately about the creation of environments that encourage 'right relationships', efforts described as peacebuilding (Curle, 1999; Galtung, 1996; Llewellyn 2012).

The literature supports the claims made in this thesis that social contexts are socially constructed and influenced by neoliberal, globalized capitalism. The literature also highlights the way a focus on gendered dichotomies and dominant discourses related to perpetrators and victims of violence directs our gaze away from these broader factors to a focus on individual blame and personal responsibility. Chapter Three explores literature related to the potential of radical transformative peacebuilding approaches that move away from a focus on individual responsibility to include a wider analysis of the influences of social and cultural violence and ultimately compel a collective community response.

Chapter Three also acknowledges and critiques contributions of the *Domestic Abuse Intervention Project* (DAIP) that was initiated in Duluth, Minnesota, and became widely known throughout the world as a prominent model of a coordinated community response to violence (Shepard & Pence, 1999). A peacebuilding framework centers on the need to transform

structural and cultural factors and de-centers DAIP's narrow and limiting focus on individual power and control.

The literature reviewed introduces key concepts related to broader ideas of social healing, concepts that move away from a focus on service delivery to individuals to suggest that community attempts to reduce interpersonal violence will be more effective when introducing measures that engage in collective social healing (Lederach & Lederach, 2010; Thompson & O'dea, 2011). I assert that concepts of social healing are central to grassroots radical community peacebuilding and therefore to the development of peaceful communities (Thompson & O'dea, 2011).

Chapter Four: Theoretical Foundations and Methodology

Chapter Four introduces the ontological, epistemological, and theoretical foundations of this thesis and then moves to a discussion of methodology, including recruitment of interviewees, the details of the sample, and how ethical concerns were addressed.

In this chapter, I address the 'I' in the research process, the recognition that social research is a 'messy' enterprise that attempts to explore complex topics (Law 2004). Like Wallace (2009:89), I note the inclusion of my own identity, experiences, and knowledges as intrinsic to authenticating what I claim and how I write, "in keeping with the triple crisis (representation, legitimacy and praxis) faced by researchers". I emphasize that subjectivity, as feminist research argues, is inevitable and that the researcher's own experiences and consciousness are involved in the research process and are, in fact, integral to it (Stanley & Wise, 1993: 58).

A meta-framework of critical realism influences the ontological, epistemological, and theoretical foundations of this thesis. Chapter Four highlights the merits of critical realism and includes a description of other theoretical contributions, including peacebuilding, feminism, and co-cultural communication theory (Stanley & Wise, 1993; Orbe, 1998; Alexander, 2008; Lederach & Lederach, 2011; Ramsbotham et al, 2011). The dislocation theory of addiction, also a significant theoretical influence, is described in Chapter Three and expanded upon in Chapter Seven (Alexander, 2008; Mate, 2008).

Critical realism was chosen as a meta-framework because it blends modernist and postmodernist approaches that can accommodate a vision for social change without claiming to hold on to an absolute truth (Stones, 1994; Houston 2001). The merits of critical realism are characterized as bridging the divide between the relativism that often pervades post-modernism and the narrow focus of sociological modernism that makes claims to objective truth (Stones, 1994). As I argue in Chapter Four, the possibility of an emancipatory social agenda, ongoing critical analysis, and an appreciation that knowledge is partial and not fixed are attributes that render critical realism suitable for this thesis.

Co-cultural theory is useful in helping to articulate the ways in which lived experience can be differentiated based on gendered experiences as well as other factors (Orbe, 1998). It is also helpful in articulating the ways in which socialization processes that comprise one's lived experience are cumulative, as well as gendered, racialized, etc. Further, informed by feminist, standpoint, and muted group theory, co-cultural theory is useful in

highlighting the influence of culture, which includes social media and online forms of entertainment, in shaping gendered expectations of behavior and communication (Orbe, 1998).

The feminist argument that asserts the personal is also political is central to this thesis and provides the basis of a critical, politicized articulation of interpersonal violence. However, as noted above, subjectivity in feminist research is inevitable and the researchers own experiences and consciousness are integral to the research process (Stanley & Wise, 1993). My own lived experiences, both personal and professional, contribute to my desire to politicize the issue of interpersonal violence. These are accounted for in detail in Chapter Four.

During my previous professional work as a clinical therapist in addiction and mental health services in the province of Nova Scotia, I came to believe that the number one issue underlying substance abuse and/or addiction and most mental health issues is relationship conflicts and interpersonal violence experienced as a child and/or as an adult. These connections between experiences of previous trauma and violence and subsequent substance abuse and/or mental health issues are staggering and pronounced, especially among girls and women (Najavits, 2002; Brown, 2008; Covington 2008; Minerson et al. 2011; Poole & Greaves, 2012). As a clinical therapist, I worked primarily with individuals and over the years I began to experience this work as reactive and repetitive. I asked myself if politicizing this work could contribute to lowering the incidence of interpersonal violence? I was therefore challenged personally to locate a political avenue to give ‘voice’ to my experience and to the experience of so many people of all genders who

had felt silenced. As described in Chapter Four, this thesis serves as a political act to bring forward my experience to help motivate needed change that, I posit, is transformative, grassroots community peacebuilding.

Throughout this thesis I argue that grassroots community peacebuilding must be concerned with the quality of life of all community citizens and that the goal of obtaining 'positive peace' is ultimately about creating right relationships (Galtung, 1996; Ramsbotham, et al. 2011). Therefore, I argue, peacebuilding can be understood as working towards the creation of socially just environments in which individuals can resolve their conflict non-violently and develop healthy relationships. As Lederach and Lederach (2010) eloquently advance, peacebuilding can be described as creating environments guided by the three powerful metaphors of 'safety', 'belonging', and 'voice'; these metaphors are taken up and referred to throughout this thesis.

Chapter Four also elaborates the ways in which peacebuilding, feminist, co-cultural communication and the dislocation theory of addiction are influential in framing and development of the interview questions and methodology. The chapter explains the recruitment process of the thirty-four interview participants and offers descriptions of the sample, the ways ethical concerns were addressed, and the steps taken to thematically analyze the data.

Chapter Five: Findings

The findings chapter highlights data that addressed the research question to explore what community members of Lunenburg County say about the structural and cultural influences on interpersonal violence. This

chapter showcases the particularly interesting findings that arose out of the interviews and focus groups. The findings are presented in three sections that are subsequently analyzed in the following three chapters. Section 1 presents findings related to cultural and structural influences on interpersonal violence; Section 2 presents findings related to the culture of alcohol and links to interpersonal violence and Section 3 presents findings related to community responses to the structural and cultural influences on interpersonal violence. A total of fifteen themes are presented within these sections prior to analyzing them within the wider literature. These findings are analyzed within a peace-building framework in the subsequent three chapters.

Chapter Six: Cultural and Structural Influences on Interpersonal Violence

Chapter Six, the first of three data analysis chapters, presents analysis of the qualitative research data related to what research participants identified as cultural and structural influences on direct violence. As noted previously, much of the efforts to address interpersonal violence have been reactive, narrow in focus and lacking in coordination, often the result of limited funding (Flaherty, 2010). Therefore, the application of a peacebuilding framework provided an opportunity to acknowledge the influence of broad cultural and structural factors that inform the lived experience of citizens in Lunenburg County and to explore connections to direct violence. These factors are local and contextualized to Lunenburg County and are also necessarily global to acknowledge the power of the internet and globalization to shape local experience. For example, given the

virtual tsunami of social media I believed it was important to explore their influence on the lived experience of citizens in Lunenburg County and to acknowledge the ways these influences are cumulative.

In this chapter, I use Galtung's (1990) definition of cultural violence that refers to aspects in the culture that validate or obscure violence and are used to justify or legitimize direct or structural violence. An example of cultural violence is presented in the report titled "*Sensing the Impacts of Hypersexualization and Opportunities for Change in Nova Scotia*" (2012). This report explores the influence of hypersexualization on youth and concludes that hypersexualization is normal and pervasive. The report suggests that getting youth to talk about hypersexualization is "like a fish trying to describe water" because hypersexualization is "like the air we breathe and the water we swim in" (Tobin, 2012: 9).

The influence of this kind of pervasive cultural messaging was explored through the interviews. Naming these influences as a form of cultural violence demonstrates the relevance of this research to the literature and to current issues in Nova Scotia. I did not fully anticipate the range and scope of detail presented by interviewees that linked cultural and structural factors to direct violence. Particularly evident is a strong negative appraisal of many cultural factors in Lunenburg County, factors that participants describe as influential throughout their own lifespan. Notably, participants also discussed the concept of shame that is explored in some detail in this chapter. This appreciation of the power of cultural and structural factors to shape and influence behaviour challenges narrow understandings of the origins of

violence that are often confined to discourses of individual responsibilisation (Scourfield & Welsh, 2002; Lupton, 2005; Gillingham, 2006; Swadener, 2010; Chan, 2013; Liebenberg, Ungar & Ikeda, 2013; Mellows, 2013; Haydock, 2014).

All interview participants articulated a surprising number of examples of cultural violence and potential links to direct violence. However, interviewees' confidence in their ability to promote change wavered. That is, they questioned their agency. The theme of agency is explored in Chapters Seven and Eight as a necessary means for reducing cultural violence.

A chart in Chapter Six summarizes the data by positioning structural and cultural violence at the center of a circle and surrounded by aspects interviewees identified as linked to violence: neoliberalism, globalization, patriarchy, colonialism and various forms of marginalization, including racism, sexism, ageism, and abilism. The outer sphere also includes aspects of community life in Lunenburg County interviewees specifically linked to violence in the culture. Centering structural and cultural violence in this way highlights the importance of central claims made in this thesis and is supported by the perceptions of research participants: structural and cultural violence significantly influence the development of both boys and girls.

Chapter Seven: Substance Abuse and Peacebuilding

Chapter Seven expands upon themes in Chapter Six by exploring ways in which one aspect of cultural violence—alcohol abuse—influences the development of boys and girls and is connected to direct violence. Chapter Seven asserts that the culture of alcohol is pervasive in Lunenburg County

and its link to violence is substantiated both by data collected here and by relevant literature (Jernigan, 2011; Stockwell, 2011; Parker & McCaffree, 2013; Wells, Dozois & Esina, 2013). This chapter also highlights the ways in which the culture of alcohol is socially constructed and profiles the dislocation theory of addiction to assert that environments that promote disconnection, alienation, and dislocation are linked to increased rates of interpersonal violence and substance abuse. However, Chapter Seven vividly portrays the ways neoliberal governments individualize problems that are socially constructed. Specifically, I examine how alcohol is aggressively and successively marketed and the stigma that exists regarding acknowledging a substance abuse problem. As highlighted by Alexander (2008), a culture of alcohol is orchestrated by globalized free market economies. When problems with alcohol, like problems with interpersonal violence, remain private and highly stigmatized, abuse is effectively silenced as a private, individual matter.

The dislocation theory of addiction shifts the origins of addiction from a total focus on individual causes to inclusion of social and environmental causes. Traditionally, much of substance abuse and/or addiction research has explored individual, genetic, and/or moral explanations (Alexander, 2008). However, the dislocation theory of addiction focuses primarily on the ways in which environmental factors nurture connection and a sense of belonging or dislocation and alienation (ibid). This theory suggests that the ways the social environment shapes the lived experiences of individuals is most significant in determining if they will develop a predisposition to substance abuse and/or addiction (Alexander, 2008; Mate, 2008). In this

shift to what Alexander (2008) calls opportunities for psychosocial integration, the focus of prevention also shifts to the creation of nurturing communities. Indeed, both peacebuilding theorists and advocates of the dislocation theory of addiction assert that the creation of environments that promote positive relationships and promote psychosocial integration are the antidote to both substance abuse and violence (Curle, 1999; Alexander, 2008; and Mate, 2008; Lederach & Lederach, 2010).

However, Chapter Seven describes ways in which economic interests trump social mandates within neoliberal contexts and erode the attributes of a community that promote psychosocial integration (Chan, 2013; Mellows, 2013; Giroux, 2014; Haydock, 2014). For example, permitting the marketing of alcohol to children and youth in Nova Scotia indicates the priority of economic interests over child welfare (Addictions Services Alcohol Task Group, 2007). This chapter explores the various ways in which advocacy efforts for broad policy measures to limit the harm of alcohol are confronted by barriers within governments influenced by neoliberalism and globalization (Chan, 2013; Haydock, 2014; Mellows, 2013). Again, the concept of agency is crucial in relation to limiting the negative impact of aspects of the culture identified as linked to both the sale of alcohol and violence.

Chapter Eight: Community Peacebuilding

While data presented in Chapters Six and Seven focuses on cultural and structural factors linked to direct experiences of violence, analysis in Chapter Eight moves to identify community measures identified by interviewees as necessary to reduce violence.

As in earlier chapters, the analysis in Chapter Eight uses Galtung's (1976; 1996; 2010) analytic triangle of violence to advance the argument that all forms of interpersonal violence demand coordinated community responses to the structural and cultural factors linked to direct violence. Thinking about prevention of direct violence as mandating communities to respond to structural and cultural factors potentially linked to direct violence is, in many ways, a transformative directive that expands prevention efforts.

The concept of social healing, introduced in Chapter Three, is addressed in this chapter in relation to the emancipatory function of peacebuilding that aims to create environments in which all community members can flourish (Thompson & O'dea, 2011). The closely related concept of positive peace is also reintroduced in this chapter and described as the restoration of relationships, the creation of social systems that serve the needs of the whole population, and the constructive resolution of violence (Galtung, 1996).

The specific focus of Chapter Eight aligns with the meta-analysis which frames the entire thesis and asserts that grassroots community peacebuilding involves defining and connecting measures, first at the local level, that can lead to challenging broad oppressive cultural and structural factors that are linked to the promotion of violence at provincial and national levels (Curle, 1971, 1995; Galtung, 1990, 1995; Melander, 2005; Mitchels, 2006; Heathershaw, 2007; Schirch, 2008; Flaherty, 2010; Lederach & Lederach, 2010; Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall, 2011). This conception of peacebuilding is described as grassroots and relational, focusing on the well-being of local citizens within local communities (Llewellyn, 2012).

Acknowledging the transformative potential of peacebuiding involves communities reimagining the ways in which individuals are supported throughout their life span to feel safe, to develop non-violent interpersonal relationships, and acquire a sense of belonging (Lederach & Lederach, 2010).

Chapter Eight profiles themes that emerged from data analysis related to community peacebuilding measures, themes that acknowledge a need to create social and cultural contexts within local communities that promote social healing, nonviolence, and positive relationships.

This chapter returns to the metaphor of ‘voice’ to acknowledge a dual role that is both individually therapeutic in helping to promote individual healing and functions in collective awareness raising, which can lead to collective community action. Naming experiences of violence and the disconnection that saturates many social structures and is often a part of our cultural landscape, and thus impacts personal lives, is the first step toward transformation (McCauley, 2013). While individual interview participants who advocated for lifting the silence regarding violence asserted their resistance to violence and their personal agency, they questioned the possibility of impacting wider systemic structural and cultural factors that sustain interpersonal violence.

A second theme explored in this chapter is related to the ways in which communities can engage men and boys in efforts to prevent violence. Interviewees highlighted that such efforts may include teaching men and boys to deconstruct patriarchal influences that may limit positive and non-violent conceptualizations of masculinity. In this chapter this discussion was

followed by an examination of the ways in which current structural and cultural practices inform a politics of ‘othering’ or ‘scapegoating’ perpetrators of violence. The ways in which the justice system ‘othered’ perpetrators of violence were noted by interviewees as serving to differentiate and distance them from ‘mainstream’ community members. This chapter also incorporated a discussion of the role of correctional facilities and punitive justice versus restorative justice approaches. Interviewees shared their belief in the promise of restorative approaches to promote individual and social healing. These beliefs and hopes were interrogated and discussed in relation to the literature that was supportive while advocating cautionary measures. This discussion was important to my thesis because of the ways restorative approaches holds both perpetrators of violence accountable for their actions and invites a communal response. As such it can avoid slipping into individual responsibilisation noted above that obscures the ways communities fail to support individuals. Restorative approaches are linked to community peacebuilding responses that promote and support the development of healthy and non-violent relationships.

Chapter Eight also acknowledges the ways in which communities are confronted with the magnitude and power of globalized marketing and social media and explores the ways in which agency is challenged both at the individual and community level. Questions regarding communities’ ability and/or responsibility to regulate these influences within a mass-mediated, capitalist society in which social media, social marketing, and advertising contribute to defining our ‘field of experience’ from birth are explored through the relevant literature (Orbe, 1998; Kilbourne, 2000; Katz, 2006; Levin &

Kilbourne, 2009). These questions are positioned within the context of highly publicized events at Dalhousie University's School of Dentistry in 2015. These events highlighted recent shifts towards more racist and sexist images in various forms of social media, online pornography and video games that are heavily consumed by boys between the ages of 12 and 17 and a need for collective community responsibility to provide social and cultural contexts which promote equity and respect (Backhouse, McRae & Iyer, 2015).

Another theme explored the position of municipal governments to influence local decisions that can help to reduce the harms of alcohol and alcohol-related violence and address broader structural and cultural issues.

Finally, Chapter Eight discusses a role for peace education in reducing interpersonal violence, including teaching conflict resolution skills, with a special emphasis on teaching youth in schools. It is argued that if such tools include learning critical peace theory, the structural and cultural factors that are linked to interpersonal violence could be scrutinized, unpacked, and deconstructed. This chapter notes that critical peace theory, like all forms of critical social theory, points to action that promotes greater social justice (Brantmeier, 2011). While education alone is not sufficient to promote behavioral change, I argue that the deep structural and cultural changes required to end interpersonal violence are multi-faceted and that peace education is one component of a broader community response (Harvey, Barcia-Moreno & Butchart 2007).

Taken together, the themes in Chapter Eight focus on change within systems, with particular emphasis on the school and justice systems, that are

indicative of a community peacebuilding response to end interpersonal violence.

Summary

Exploring the transformative possibilities of applying a community peacebuilding approach to the persistent and challenging issue of interpersonal violence in the concluding chapter of this thesis is an opportunity for me to politicize an issue that is both personal and professional.

Overall, the data presented here reveal a desire among interviewees to foster new cultural and structural practices that promote and nurture more caring and peaceful relationships. While the challenges to initiating social change are acknowledged, interviewees make specific recommendations that focus on social responsibility and community values.

A central claim of this thesis is that focusing on social, economic, and cultural environments that comprise the field of experience for individuals within communities is pivotal to influencing violence or peace. While this view acknowledges the importance of personal responsibility, it highlights public and social accountability (Moffat, 1999; Mellows, 2013 Haydock, 2014).

This community peacebuilding perspective suggests that if we want people to act non-violently we must create a social ecology that encourages peace and discourages violence. I argue throughout this thesis that such contexts can only be co-created by a collective agency moored by a belief that such transformation is possible.

Further, I argue that when violence is understood as a social and political problem that is socially constructed, it is possible to construct

different cultural and structural institutions to promote peace. While government prioritization of financial mandates can challenge both individual and collective agency, I argue that peacebuilding implies resistance to globalization trends that result in dislocation and alienation.

The meta-analysis which frames and unites the entire thesis asserts that grassroots community peacebuilding involves defining cultural and structural influences on violence so as to connect measures at the local level that can lead to challenging broad oppressive cultural and structural factors at provincial, national and international levels (Curle, 1971, 1995; Galtung, 1990, 1995; Melander, 2005; Mitchels, 2006; Heathershaw, 2007; Schirch, 2008; Flaherty, 2010; Lederach & Lederach, 2010; Ramsbotham et al. 2011).

Chapter Two: Lunenburg County, Nova Scotia, Canada: Community Responses to Interpersonal Violence

Introduction

Lunenburg County, Nova Scotia, Canada is known for its scenic coastal beauty, rural landscape and as the Christmas tree capital of the world. However, as in every part of the world, it has social problems that are often difficult to acknowledge and address. Interpersonal violence, including childhood sexual abuse and sexual assault, occurs within a cultural context and is linked to a myriad of other factors. A culture of silence pervades issues of sexual assault and other forms of interpersonal violence and this silence translates into low rates of reporting these crimes to the police. For example, research by the Status of Women Nova Scotia indicates that between 6 and 8% of sexual assaults are reported to the police (McFayden, 2009). Low rates of reporting and other cultural factors that serve to minimize and silence incidents of interpersonal violence create barriers to obtaining an accurate picture of the full extent of their occurrence. The link between substance abuse and all forms of interpersonal violence also adds complexity to these issues and is often a contributing factor in the silencing of these crimes. The complexity involved in addressing the issues of sexual assault and other forms of interpersonal violence may in part, contribute to a distinct lack of success in lowering the rates of interpersonal violence in Lunenburg County during the past forty years.

This chapter introduces to Lunenburg County and will include a rich description of both the attributes and assets of the landscape and population while also providing a description of the occurrence of interpersonal violence, including sexual assault, against women and girls. It will also provide an

overview of current efforts in the county that focus on reducing interpersonal violence, including sexual assault.

In April of 2012 the Status of Women Canada provided significant three-year project funding to Second Story Women's Centre located in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia with the goal of reducing violence against women and girls in Lunenburg County by encouraging a collaborative community response. A description of this project, its' efforts to engage local community citizens and the links to other efforts in the county to reduce violence against women and girls are included. This project's mandate to engage men and boys in these efforts will also be described. This project is representative of a community response to interpersonal violence which sought to engage the community. It attempted to incorporate knowledge from previous efforts while also including a strong focus on community engagement. Efforts to reduce interpersonal violence are ongoing as the issue remains significant. Finally, this chapter will also provide a rationale for choosing to place a high value on the expertise of local citizens and professionals.

Local Expertise

Lunenburg County, Nova Scotia, Canada is the geographical area in which I have worked and lived for the past eighteen years. I have worked both as an addiction and mental health therapist and as a community organizer/activist, to help create a coordinated community response to violence; including sexual assault, against women and girls. This geographic area is chosen very deliberately as the case study for this thesis because of a preferential option to value what is local. This writer chose to place a value on local stories, local wisdom and local responses to difficult community

issues. This thesis, thereby elevates, highlights and celebrates the ability of local citizens to socially construct solutions to problems in their communities.

Local expertise is often devalued. This devaluing happens in many different ways. One way in which it occurs is with the invitation of an outside 'expert' to come to the area to advise and strategize about how best to deal with local problems. This strategy is often disempowering to local professionals and engaged citizens who have been working on local issues for decades. Such top-down approaches serve to silence local wisdom (Hoffman, 2011; Donais, 2012; Wallace, 2013). These approaches are disempowering both in the lack of recognition and appreciation for local expertise and in the way they serve to promote an internal devaluation of local professional skills and expertise. In other words, such approaches work to create self-doubt and reinforce reliance on outside expertise. When local citizens and professionals feel disempowered when working to end violence against women and girls it can result in a withdrawal from the issue. When this happens community citizens and professionals become less engaged. Therefore, choosing Lunenburg County as a 'case study' is a measure taken to counteract this effect by deliberating seeking, valuing and constructing local wisdom.

Local is Global: Peace Studies

A second reason to support the choice of Lunenburg County as a 'case study' for a thesis within the Peace Studies Division is the belief in the field of peace studies having applicability to ending violence against women and girls in Lunenburg County, Nova Scotia, Canada. Often, the concept of peacebuilding and the study of peace studies more generally, is understood

to be relevant to areas of the world which have experienced war or recent conflict. However, with the onset of globalization and the recognition that what is local is often global, there is growing acknowledgment of the interconnectedness of the global community. Returning to the radical roots of peacebuilding entails a focus on the establishment of communities that promote and create environments in which citizens are not only free from experiencing direct violence but also have opportunities to flourish (Curle, 1995; Mitchels, 2006; Galtung, 2007; Lederach & Lederach, 2010). This thesis is based on the belief that this is an emancipatory function of peacebuilding that is relevant to all communities which experience violence and includes a focus on promotion of environments where both boys and men and girls and women can reach their full potential as human beings.

Town of Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, Canada

The town of Lunenburg is known for its' scenic beauty and ocean coastline and is the town from which the County receives its' name. It has a small population of approximately twenty-three hundred people (Nova Scotia, Canada, 2014).

In the summer, many sailing vessels, yachts, schooners and fishing boats enter Lunenburg harbour. Lunenburg is home to the famous Bluenose Schooner that is regarded as a Canadian icon and has a proud position as the image on the ten-cent coin. The town of Lunenburg is a United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) site. The Old Town of Lunenburg is known as the best surviving example of a planned British colonial settlement in North America. It was established in 1753, when German, Swiss and Montbéliardian French immigrants were brought to Nova

Scotia under a British colonization plan and has retained much of its original layout and overall appearance (UNESCO, World Hertiage List, 1992).

The new settlement, named Lunenburg after the Royal House of Brunswick-Luneberg, from which the Hanoverian kings of England were descended. The 1453 largely German-speaking Protestants who migrated to Lunenburg in 1752-53 represented the most northerly German settlement in North America in the 18th century. The German language and German customs survived an unusually long time in Lunenburg, owing to its relative isolation (UNESCO, World Heritage List, 1992).

At present, the people who live in the town of Lunenburg take a great deal of pride in preserving the town's identity throughout the centuries by preserving the wooden architecture of the houses and public buildings. Many of the houses are over a hundred years old. Not only are the houses quite 'old' in the town, but also, many of the people. The town of Lunenburg is reported to have one of the highest concentrations of Canadian centenarians and it is suggested that the salty ocean breeze, a fish-rich diet and a stress-free community spirit contribute to a long life (Glasman, 2013). However, no community is without its' share of social problems.

As in the rest of the province of Nova Scotia, change is inevitable with the decline of reliance on natural resources. For example, the town of Lunenburg and many other towns and villages along the coast of Lunenburg County have relied on the offshore Atlantic fishery and the future of this industry is uncertain. As is the case in other areas of the county, the town of Lunenburg has identified retaining young families and creating employment

opportunities and affordable housing as a key component of their strategic plan (Town of Lunenburg Strategic Plan, 2011).

Lunenburg County, Nova Scotia

In the Vital Signs report produced by the Lunenburg County Community Fund (2013) many of the positive aspects of living in this area were summarized. This included acknowledging that the rates of charitable giving are higher than the provincial and national average and that the amount of affordable housing exceeds the provincial average. Generally, it is acknowledged that the reported violent and property crime rates are well below the provincial and national averages. Wait times for certain medical procedures are generally shorter than those in other parts of our province. Our poverty rates are well below the provincial and national averages.

They identified key data areas that were related to the future of the county that included the changing demographics, the decline of the total population of those 34 years and under, coupled with the growth of the population of those over 55, the changing nature of the County's economy, with a declining role for the resource sector including agriculture, fisheries and forestry. Manufacturing continues to be the biggest employer; however, it too is experiencing challenges. The loss of jobs in all sectors creates a difficult environment for young people wanting to work in Lunenburg County. The literacy rates and high school completion rates lag behind the provincial and national averages. Employers seeking a skilled workforce face a number of issues.

Smoking and obesity rates are significantly above the provincial and national averages, and our rates of physical activity are behind the provincial

and national averages. It is also interesting to note that because of the lack of sufficient data the Lunenburg County Vital Signs report writers said they did not write about the experiences of women who experience interpersonal violence other than to note the numbers of those who enter the Harbour House, the County's transition home or who laid a charge with the police (Personal Communication, June 2012). The scarcity of data about women and girls' experiences of interpersonal violence in all its' forms often renders the issue invisible.

Rurality

The "rural and small town" definition of rural proposed by Statistics Canada has been used in reports that profile rural life in Nova Scotia. According to that definition:

> "rural areas are all census subdivisions (CSDs) that are not part of census metropolitan areas (CMAs) or census agglomerations (CAs). The latter two concepts correspond to census subdivisions that have a population of 100,000 or more for CMAs and 10,000 or more for CAs, as well as all fringe census subdivisions where over 50% of the labour force works in an urban area. Based on the rural and small town definition, the rural population in Nova Scotia is 333,207 inhabitants" (Lambert, 2005).

Based on this definition all of Lunenburg County can be described as rural and small town. The percentage of Nova Scotians who live in rural settings is higher than the rest of Canada, where on average, slightly over 20 per cent live in rural settings (De Peuter and Sorensen 2005). It has been noted that the rural population decreased by 2% between 1996 and 2001 while the urban population continued to grow (Lambert, 2005).

Political Representation: Lunenburg County

Three levels of government influence Lunenburg County: municipal, provincial and federal. The municipal level has the greatest number of elected officials that include a mayor and district counsellor representation for each of the three town councils and two municipal councils. Lunenburg County is comprised of three towns; Mahone Bay, Lunenburg and Bridgewater, and two municipalities; Chester and Lunenburg. It has been noted that if women are equally represented in all forms of government the rates of interpersonal violence they experience appear to be lower than in other areas where the majority of the government is comprised of men (Melander, 2005). When the elected municipal representatives are examined in terms of their gender it is noted that the town of Mahone Bay has seven elected councillors in total and five of them are male and two are female and both the mayor and deputy major are male (Town of Mahone Bay, 2013).

The town of Bridgewater mirrors the composition of the town of Mahone Bay. It has seven elected councillors in total and five of them are male and two are female and both the mayor and deputy major of Bridgewater are male (Town of Bridgewater, 2013). In the town of Lunenburg the elected mayor is a female and the remaining six councillors and deputy mayor are male (Town of Lunenburg, 2013).

In the municipality of the district of Lunenburg both the elected mayor and deputy mayor are male and of the total thirteen councillors three are female and ten are male (Municipality of the District of Lunenburg, 2013).

The municipality of the district of Chester is comprised of seven councillors; two are female and five are male (Municipality of the District of

Chester, 2013). The warden is male and is regarded as the leader of this district.

When the numbers of elected municipal leaders in Lunenburg County are reviewed from a gendered perspective it can be deducted that 36% of the councillors are female. In terms of municipal leadership positions, one out of nine (11%) are female. The remaining four deputy and three mayoral positions and the one warden position are male.

Provincially, Lunenburg County has two elected representatives; one is female and one is male (The Nova Scotia Legislature, 2013). The province of Nova Scotia has a total of 51 provincially elected representatives and out of this total number 14 or 27.45% are women (Parliament of Canada, 2013).

Federally, Lunenburg County has one elected Member of Parliament who is female. Nationally, Canada elects 308 representatives to the House of Parliament of which 88 or 26% are female, a one per cent increase over 2011 (Anderssen, 2015).

Thirty-eight of one hundred and five senators are women in the Canadian Parliament (Parliamentary Union, 2013).

Demographics

Lunenburg County is one of eighteen counties in Nova Scotia. The province of Nova Scotia has a total population of 921,727 as of 2011, with Lunenburg County having a population of 47, 591 (Lunenburg County Community Fund, 2010). Halifax is the provincial capital city and many individuals commute the approximately one hundred kilometer distance to the city, daily for their employment. The province of Nova Scotia is situated at the eastern coast of Canada along the Atlantic Ocean and consists largely

of a peninsula that is 360 miles (580 kilometers) in length (Canadian Encyclopedia, 2016). The peninsula is surrounded by four bodies of water—the Atlantic Ocean, the Bay of Fundy, the Northumberland Strait, and the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

With an area of 21,425 square miles (55,491 square kilometers), Nova Scotia is larger than Denmark, although somewhat smaller than Scotland, after which it is named (ibid). Almost 80 percent of Nova Scotia's population trace their ancestry either wholly or partly to the British Isles. Those with French origin rank second: 16.7 percent of residents have some French ancestry. The next largest groups by ancestry are German and Dutch. Residents of Nova Scotia are also of Polish, Italian, Chinese, and Lebanese descent. According to the Statistics Canada National Household Survey (2011) 20, 790 residents of the province is Black.

The Office of Aboriginal Affairs reports there are 33,845 people of Aboriginal identity in Nova Scotia - an increase of 42% since 2001. This population makes up 2.7% of the total population of Nova Scotia. The First Nation population is much younger than the general population with a median age of 25.4 versus 41.6 for the total population. Among Status Indians, 10,343 live on reserve in Nova Scotia (Nova Scotia, Canada, 2011).

There is a small number of First Nation people living in Lunenburg County. They are largely from the Acadia First Nation with the largest population on reserve living in Gold River. Acadia First Nation is composed of five reserves spread throughout the South-Western shore of Nova Scotia and across three counties. Gold River Reserve was established on May 8th,

1820. Currently, it is reported that approximately 77 individuals live on reserve in Gold River, Lunenburg County (Government of Canada, 2010).

There are 93.6 men for every 100 women in Nova Scotia compared with the national average of 96.1 men per 100 women (Statistics Canada, 2013). The number of women in urban Nova Scotia explains this result because the ratio there is 92.3 men to every 100 women, however, the rural ratio is closer to the national figure at 96 men per 100 women (ibid, 2013). The population in rural Nova Scotia is older than that in the cities. In the last two censuses, rural Nova Scotia had the lowest share of people below 15 years of age compared with other regions and the highest share of people 65 years of age or older (Statistics Canada, 2013).

In May of 2006 the median age in Lunenburg County was 46.0 years. This was up 3.4 years from a median age of 42.6 years in 2001. Compared to the provincial and national averages, the median age for Lunenburg County was 10.0% higher than the provincial level of 41.8 years and 16.5% higher than the national level of 39.5 years (Lunenburg County Community Fund, 2010).

The exception to this trend, as noted earlier, lies within the First Nations rural communities in which their populations are growing and are predominantly young.

The Lunenburg County Community Fund (2010) describes the composition of families in terms of married, common-law and lone-parent. It notes that families having one child; 20% were married, 27% were common-law and 65% were lone-parent. Families with two children were comprised of 19% married, 10% common-law and 26% were lone-parent. Of those

families who had three or more children 5% were married, 3% were common-law and 9% were lone-parent. It is interesting to note that in all three categories lone-parent families were most highly represented. The following table outlines income for families in Nova Scotia and makes clear that lone-parent families have far less income than couple families.

Table: Median after-tax income in 2010 for economic families, Nova Scotia, Canada (2011 National Household Survey)

Nova Scotia

Canada

Economic family structure and sex	Number	Median after-tax income ($)	Median after-tax Income ($)
Couple families	221,385	64,136	72,356
Lone-parent families	40,780	36,309	42,401

About 8 in 10 lone-parent families were female lone-parent families in 2011, counting for 12.8% of all census families, while male lone-parent families represented 3.5% of all census families. This indicates that most lone-parents are women and have significantly less income.

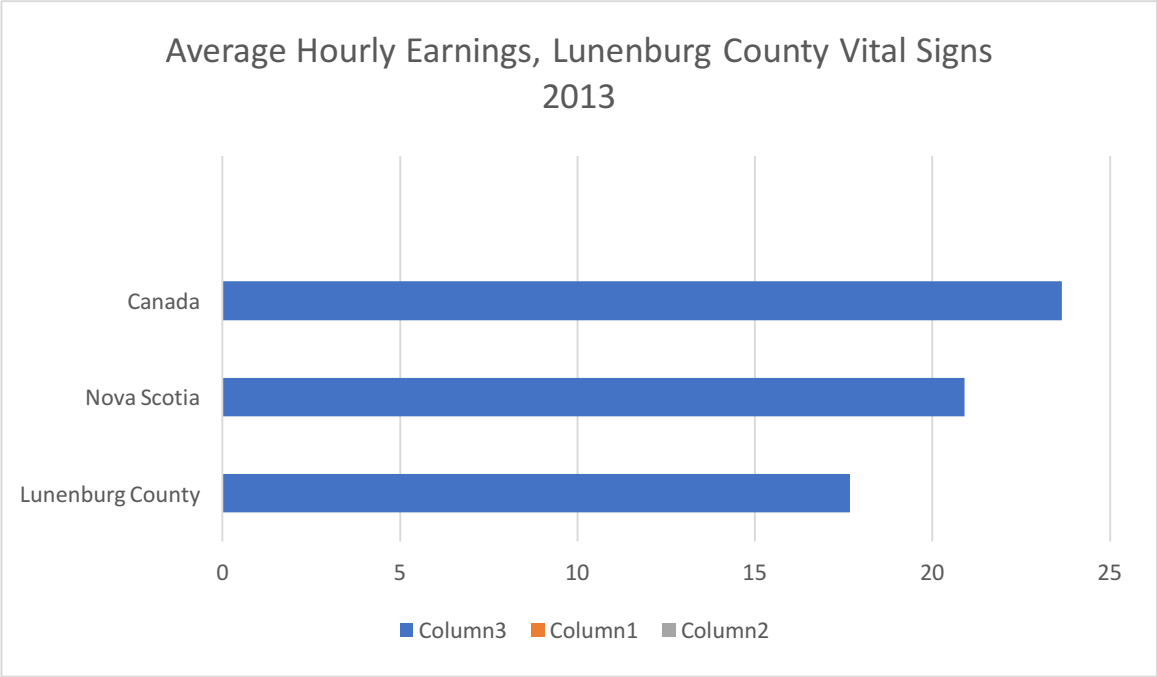
Income and Education

Incomes in Nova Scotia are lower than the national average and urban residents earn more than rural residents. Fifty-six per cent of people living in Lunenburg County have either a post-secondary certificate, diploma or university degree (One Nova Scotia, 2013).

Lunenburg County, Nova Scotia Profile (2011 National Household Survey)

Characteristic	Total	Male	Female
Total population in private households by citizenship	46,475	22,785	23,695
Canadian Citizens aged under 18	7, 595	3,870	3,720
Canadian citizens aged 18 and over	37,875	18,475	19,400
Postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree	20,950	9,935	11,010
Median Income ($)	24,645	31,189	19,849
Average Income ($)	31,988	37,799	26,373

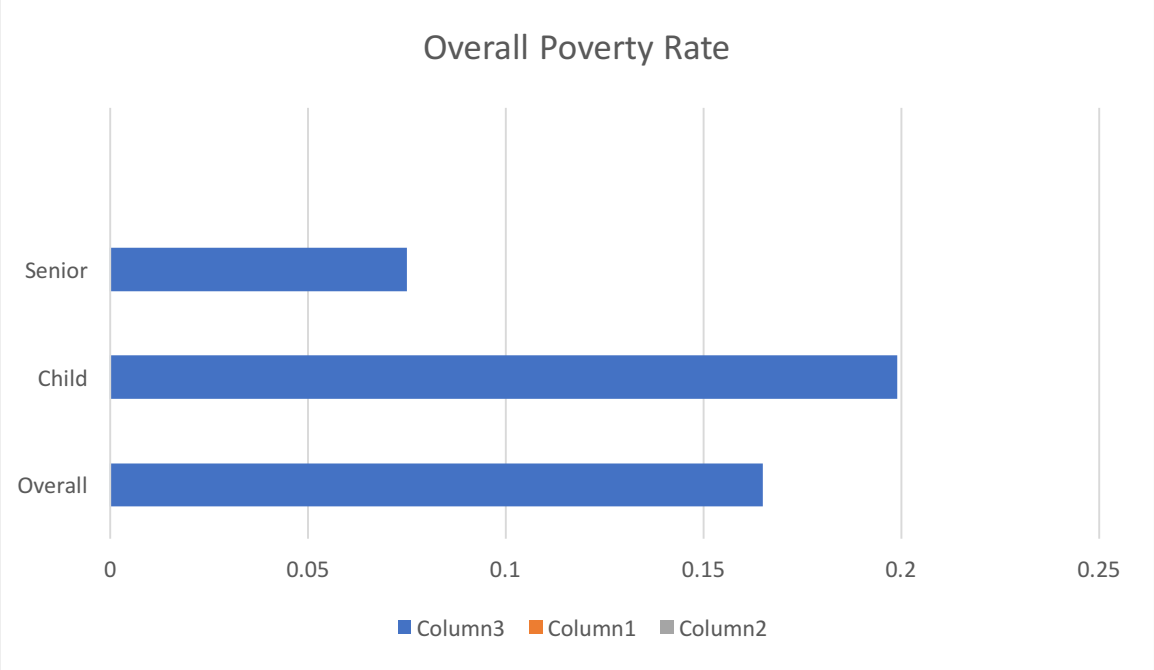
The chart below shows the average hourly income rates in Lunenburg County as portrayed *The Lunenburg County Vital Signs Report* (2013).



The average hourly earnings were $23.65 in Canada; $20.90 in Nova Scotia and $17.68 in Lunenburg County (ibid).

In both 2001 and 2006, the median and average incomes for females in Lunenburg County were below the provincial average and a large gap between male and female incomes remains overall. According to the Lunenburg County Vital Signs report (2010) women's average annual income in 2001 was $16, 679 and men's annual average income was $31,125 (ibid). This huge gap narrowed a little by 2006 when women's average annual income was $22,665, with the men's average annual income at $35, 350 (Lunenburg County Community Fund, 2010). This gap continued to narrow in 2010 as highlighted in the table above (NHS, 2011). Still, this discrepancy in wages remains troubling. While this report pointed out that there were gaps between the earnings of men and women it did not draw attention to the extent of these gaps or provide an analysis regarding the potential impacts of such gaps.

In 2005 almost half of Nova Scotian women (46.2%) earned less than $20,000. In comparison 30.3 per cent of Nova Scotian men earned less than $20,000 (McFadyen, 2009). When comparing the median income of men and women in some rural regions of Nova Scotia, women earn 55 to 60 per cent of what men earn. While women have less pay they often have greater responsibilities. For example, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (2009) stated that ninety per cent of single-parent families in Nova Scotia are led by women; twenty-five per cent of these women are receiving social assistance. The *Lunenburg County Vital Signs Report* (2013) description of poverty rates are portrayed in the chart below.



While noting a decrease in child poverty rates this report acknowledges that 19.9% or 1 in 5 children live in poverty in Lunenburg County.

Gender is identified by the Public Health Agency of Canada (2013) as one of the most prominent factors that influence a Canadian's health status. The discrepancy in rates of pay for men and women in Lunenburg County,

Nova Scotia is a form of structural violence that intersects in many ways with their experience of direct violence. For example, women living in violent contexts who have little income may believe they have few options and therefore choose to remain.

Since 2006, Lunenburg County's compounded average annual GDP growth rate of 0.6% was behind both the provincial (0.9%) and national (1.3%) rates (Lunenburg Community Vital Signs, 2013).

Economic Prosperity: Provincial Initiatives

In 2013 two high profile provincial initiatives are currently focusing on addressing the future prosperity of Nova Scotia. The Nova Scotia Commission on Building a New Economy has been provided with a mandate from the premier of Nova Scotia to gather information by meeting with individuals and organizations across the province and by conducting research to develop strategies that will revitalize the sluggish economy. This commission wrote in their interim report that the "economy of Nova Scotia is at a crossroads of threat and opportunity. Our current trajectory is not leading us to either economic prosperity or sustainability" (One Nova Scotia, 2013:1). This report fails to conduct an analysis of the disparity between wages for men and women and the impact of this divide.

A second provincial initiative titled 'Envision Nova Scotia' began with a group of concerned citizens who wanted to focus on citizen engagement to create a better Nova Scotia. A spokesperson for this group has stated that a focus on economics is not sufficient and that the way forward is through relational processes that bring citizens into conversation with each other, especially around important, complex issues (Graham, 2014). This initiative provides

the potential to broaden the discussion about what constitutes progress and prosperity in Nova Scotia.

The Canadian Context: Interpersonal Violence

Rates of interpersonal violence are difficult to measure in part because of the various forms of violence, differences in definition and a lack of well-resourced surveillance apparatus. Within the Canadian context there are distinct populations who are at greater risk to experience interpersonal violence. Younger women, aged 15-34 years are at a 20% higher risk of violent victimization than men when all other risk factors are taken into account (Sinha, 2013) Indigenous women are reported to be more than three times as likely to report being a victim of spousal violence as non-Indigenous women (Statistics Canada, 2015). Women living with physical and cognitive impairments experience violence two to three times more often than women living without impairments (Sordi, 2011). People self-identifying as homosexual or bisexual are three times more likely than heterosexuals to be victims of violence and transgender people are almost twice as likely to report ever experiencing intimate partner violence, compared to the average rate experienced by women and men (Sinha, 2013). A greater proportion of senior women to men experience family violence, with a rate 24% higher than that of senior men (Sinha, 2013). Women living in the territories are victimized at a rate eight times higher than those living in the provinces and have a risk of violent victimization about 45% higher than men's when controlling for other risk factors (Allen & Perrault, 2013). In their adult relationships' at least half of Canadian women have experienced domestic violence at some time in their lives (Johnson 2005). According to the 2004

General Social Survey, 11% of Canadian women reported being a victim of criminal harassment (stalking) in the five-year period from 1999-2004 (Statistics Canada, 2005). This represents more than 1.4 million females 15 years of age and older. Police-reported trend data noted the rate of sexual assaults against women increased from 2009 to 2010 and remained unchanged in 2011. Sexual assault is the only form of violent victimization that is not decreasing in Canada with women self-reporting 553,000 sexual assaults in 2014 (General Social Survey, 2015).

A more recent study reported that youth have a greater susceptibility to internet violence noting 17% (almost one in five) of young people between the ages of 15-29 reported they had experienced cyberbullying and/or cyberstalking (Statistics Canada, 2016).

A Canada-wide study (see table below) investigated adolescents' (average age 14.5 years) exposure to victimizations not usually examined in the literature that may be considered "milder" forms, such as school social exclusion, discrimination, and verbal threats (Romano, Bell & Billette, 2011).

The authors of this study imply that researchers exploring the extent to which adolescents' experience violence should broaden their questions to include the types of victimization listed below that can also result in serious harm.

Canadian Adolescent Exposure to Violence

Victimization type	Total % (n = 1,036	Male % (n = 525)	Female % (n=511)
Verbal harassment	35.4	31.1	39.9
Threat of physical assault	33.2	39.2	27.0
Physical assault	12.6	16.0	9.2
School social exclusion	22.8	19.8	25.8
	25.7	18.9	32.7

Discrimination No victimization 1 type 2 types 3+	38.0 28.2 18.9 14.7	40.1 29.0 15.4 15.4	35.7 27.4 22.6 14.0

This study demonstrates the importance of a sense of belonging for adolescents and highlighted that more than one in five feel excluded in a school setting. It also portrayed a significant and broader range of adolescent exposure to violence.

This brief overview highlighting a variety of forms of interpersonal violence and populations that are at higher risk among both adults and adolescents is intended to portray the significance of this issue in Canada. It is very difficult to present accurate data as the literature consistently reports that police reports comprise a very small percentage of violent incidents as most go unreported. The section below details further information and discussion related to violence experienced by individuals in Nova Scotia.

Nova Scotia: Violence Against Women and Girls

An examination of relevant literature provides a mixture of results related to rates and numbers of individuals who have experienced a variety of forms of interpersonal violence. The most accurate provincial data sources are police reports but, as noted above, most victims of interpersonal violence do not report it to the police. The national General Social Survey (GSS) is the only national survey of self-reported victimization and allows for estimates of the numbers and characteristics of victims and criminal incidents in all provinces and territories. In Canada, Statistics Canada has conducted, to date, four national General Social Surveys (GSS) to collect self-reported victimization data in 1999, 2004, 2009 and 2014. Each survey randomly

interviews, by phone, about 20,000 people across the country about their experiences of victimization. Data are collected directly from survey participants based on a 45-minute telephone conversation. It is a sample survey with a cross-sectional design conducted every five years in Canada. It can provide prevalence rates based on an estimation (General Social Survey, 2014). It is believed that this source of data reflects a more accurate representation of both interpersonal violence and sexual assaults. Results from GSS 2009 show that 88% or close to 9 in 10 sexual assaults were never reported to the police (Perreault and Brennan, 2010). According to this same survey only 15.2% of victims who experienced spousal violence reported the incident to the police and this is less than the previous two self-reported surveys in 1999 and 2004, where 19.4% and 19.0% of the victims reported the incident to the police respectively. If less than 10% of sexual assaults and 15.2% of spousal violence incidents are reported to the police it quickly becomes apparent that police records are limited in terms of describing the full scope of the problem. While this survey is a useful tool it cannot be said to provide exact numbers of individuals who experience violence. The province of Nova Scotia does not usually conduct provincial surveys related to specific incidents of violence and therefore relies on national surveys and police reports to depict a description of the rates of violence that occur. Staff within the Nova Scotia Status of Women (2014) developed a fact sheet related to intimate partner violence that was reported to the police which is presented below:

Intimate Partner Violence Victims in Nova Scotia, by violation and gender, 2013

Violation	Female Number	Female Percent	Male Number	Male Percent	Total Number	Total Percent
Homicide	4	0.2	0	0.0	4	0.2
Attempted Murder	4	0.2	0	0.0	4	0.2
Sexual Violations	91	4.6	3	0.5	94	3.7
Physical Assault	1346	67.4	472	81.8	1818	70.7
Criminal Harassment	125	6.3	15	2.6	140	5.4
Indecent/Harassing Phone Calls	107	5.4	41	7.1	148	5.8
Uttering Threats	239	12.0	43	7.5	282	11.0
Robbery	8	0.4	1	0.2	9	0.4
Other Violent Violations	72	3.6	2	0.4	74	2.9
Total	1996	100.0	577	100.0	2573	100.0

*Please note these numbers do not reflect the actual occurrence of violence. This chart contains police reported victims of violent crime by intimate partner by type and gender of the victim (Nova Scotia, 2013).

In 2009, Nova Scotia was noted to have the highest provincial rates of sexual assault in the country of Canada, in addition to high rates of other forms of interpersonal violence (Atkinson, 2009; McFayden, 2009; Nova Scotia Domestic Violence Prevention Committee Report, 2009; Sinha, 2010). According to one survey in Nova Scotia, sexual assault occurred at a rate of 40 per 1,000 in the population aged 15 and over (compared to an average of

21 per 1000 for all of Canada) with females comprising approximately 85% of all sexual assaults (McFayden, 2009).

Maire Sinha, the current Acting Chief for Statistics Canada (2016) created a statistical profile of family violence in Canada that indicated in 2009 there were 31,000 victims in Nova Scotia who self-reported that they had experiences of spousal violence in the past five years (Sinha, 2010). These numbers reflect significant differences in those above as well as the complexity and challenges involved in measuring various forms of interpersonal and spousal violence.

Other statistical information highlights further significance of this issue in Nova Scotia. For example, a one-day snap shot of 402 adult male offenders of Nova Scotia correctional facilities revealed just under one-third were in custody for domestic violence including 100 offenders considered to be at high risk of lethality (Nova Scotia Department of Justice, Policy Planning and Research, 2010). It has also been noted that women in Nova Scotia have the 2nd highest rate of stalking in Canada at 12% (ibid). The information presented above reflects the barriers and challenges to measuring rates of interpersonal violence given its' myriad forms of expression that can range from direct physical forms to cyberbullying.

Lunenburg County: Violence Against Women and Girls

At a Municipal Council meeting the mayor of the Municipality of Lunenburg, Don Downe (2012), described the rates of violence against women and girls "as a crisis in Lunenburg County" and stated that one need only read the local community newspaper to verify this fact. This local newspaper titled *The Lunenburg County Progress Bulletin* routinely publishes

stories of women who have been physically and/or sexually assaulted and has provided a great deal of coverage to several high- profile cases in which women were killed.

The Lunenburg County Community Fund (2010) reports that in 2009 there were 26 domestic violence incidents reported to the police in the town of Bridgewater and that prior to 2009 this number had been on the decline. However, Harbour House, the local transition house offering crisis and transitional services to women and children experiencing violence and abuse in Lunenburg and Queens County report they received 372 distress calls, offered 923 counselling sessions and had 86 new admissions to their home in 2009-2010 (Lunenburg County Community Fund, 2010). As of April, 2010 they had 113 open files comprised of 92 adults and 21 children. Of these 113 open files, 78 involved family violence, 18 were at high risk for murder and/or suicide and 11 involved sexual assaults (ibid).

In Lunenburg County, informal statistics, considered to be low estimates, gathered by the RCMP and Bridgewater Police Services regarding violence against women and girls, report a total of 181 assaults, 97 sexual assaults and 2 homicides between January 2007 and June 2009 as portrayed in the table below (Second Story Women's Centre, 2009).

Violence Against Women and Girls in Lunenburg County (January 2007-June 2009)

All Assaults (January 2007-June 2009	181
Sexual Assaults	97
Homicides	2

A researcher contracted by Second Story Women's Center located in the town of Lunenburg, to conduct a report on the extent of violence experienced by women in Lunenburg County conservatively estimated that the total number of women experiencing spousal abuse during the 2009/2010 fiscal year was 1300 or 6% of the total population of women over the age of 15 (Atkinson, 2010). While these numbers are greater than those reported to the police they only reveal a small portion of the full range of interpersonal violence experienced by citizens in Lunenburg County.

The 'Hidden Nature' of Interpersonal Violence

All reports and surveys that attempt to document the rates of interpersonal violence and sexual assault caution that low rates of reporting make it difficult. This scarcity of data is not entirely due to the lack of attention paid to this area. While it reflects the lack of reporting of violent crimes to the police it is also a reflection of what the literature refers to as the 'hidden nature' of such crimes (WHO, 2010).

This 'hidden nature' is a reflection of several factors. Some individuals who experience violence and certainly many families in which violence occurs have a long history of viewing these incidents as a private matter. This notion of privacy serves to keep individuals in difficult situations for long periods of time. Other barriers to reporting experiences to the police may include dissatisfaction with the justice system response. For example, when an individual calls the police to report violence or when in fear of their safety, it is now a police procedure that evidence will be collected and if sufficient evidence warrants a criminal charge will be filed by the police. A charge will be laid even if the victim decides they do not want the charge to go forward.

The victim may have called the Police because they were feeling unsafe. They may not want or anticipate that the Police will lodge a charge. While the victim may want some form of justice, that which is offered by the Criminal Justice system in Canada is often one in which the punitive measures are sometimes seen to cause further harm. These issues will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Six.

For individuals who have been sexually assaulted, reporting it to the police can be re-traumatizing and thus pose a barrier to reporting it. While all forms of victimization share a degree of 'shame' and 'stigma', nowhere is it greater than in sexual assaults and these too, are factors that limit the rate of reporting. Perhaps not to the same degree, but feelings of shame and stigma also pervade other forms of physical violence and may be a factor that contributes to low rates of reporting interpersonal violence in general.

Boys and Men: Victims of Interpersonal Violence

According to Canada's General Social Survey (2009) men report having been a victim of spousal violence at a similar rate to women in the previous five years in 2009 in Canada (Perreault and Brennan, 2010). When this fact is acknowledged in the literature it is explained that women report more serious forms of domestic violence than men. For example, female victims of self-reported domestic violence in Canada were about three times more likely than their male counterparts to report they have been sexually assaulted, beaten, choked, or threatened by a gun or knife by their current and former partners (ibid, 2010).

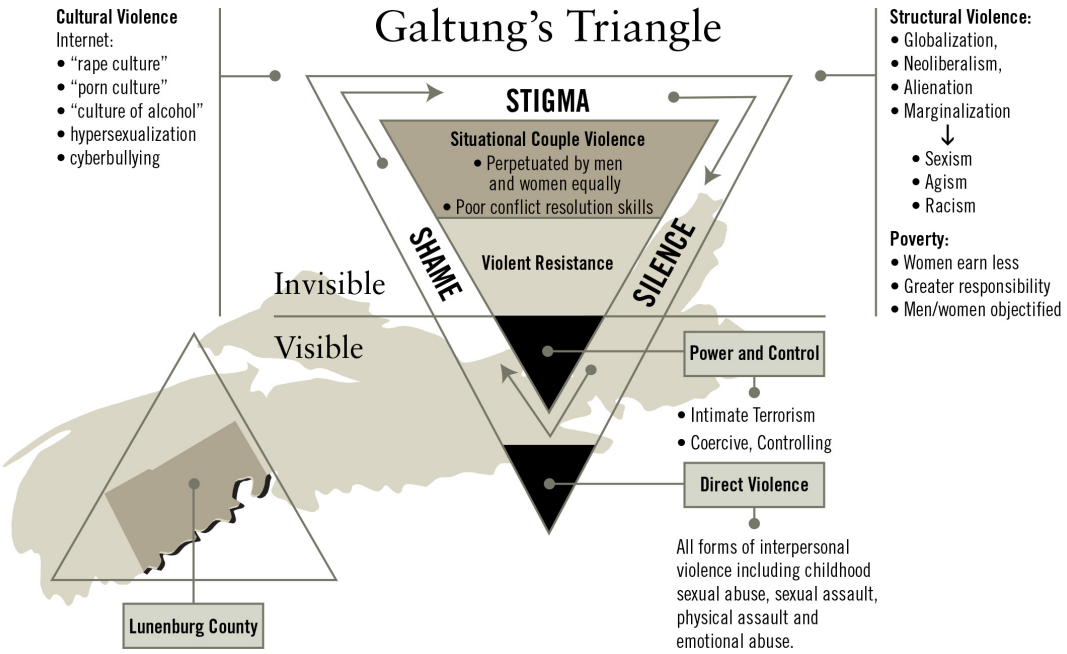
According to Johnson (2011) it is very important to recognize types of interpersonal violence. His description of the main types of violence are

outlined in the smaller triangle depicted in the graphic (page 44). At the top of the triangle he indicates a smaller amount of violence he labelled 'intimate terrorism' that is coercive and controlling. This form of violence fits into traditional power and control models because the perpetrator, most often male, focuses on power and control (Johnson, 2011). This form of violence can cause serious injury and sometimes death. Further down the triangle a second form of violence that Johnson (2011) labels 'violent resistance' depicts that violence is sometimes met with violent resistance but in the majority of cases one person, most often male, has greater strength and perpetrates more severe harm. These two types of violence are referred to as asymmetrical to mark this recognition of an imbalance in power. At the base of the triangle, this section depicts the largest number of people engaged in a form of violence that involves gender symmetry (see chart on page 48). Johnson (2011) labelled this form of violence as 'situational couple violence'. He suggests that this form of violence is not about obtaining power and control but may indicate poor conflict resolution skills. He believes this situational couple violence explains the statistics that reveal that men and women experience spousal violence at similar rates. He believes it is most important for policy makers, researchers and those engaged in community responses to violence to recognize these different typologies. Perhaps, conflict resolution and mediation skills are required to navigate relationship issues for both men and boys and girls and women. This topic will be further explored when discussing the importance of peace education in Chapter Eight.

Structural and Cultural Violence: Links to Interpersonal Violence

The origins of interpersonal violence are complex. Galtung's conflict triangle depicts direct violence as inter-related to structural and cultural forms of violence (Ramsbotham, et al. 2011).

The following graphic, based on Galtung's conflict triangle, provides an illustration of these connections in Lunenburg County. This graphic also reveals that the majority of interpersonal violence in Lunenburg County is hidden, as described previously. Therefore, much of the response to interpersonal violence has been to what has been visible. Women who experience sexual assault frequently receive counselling in private and government settings; sometimes months and years later. However, this too remains invisible as these agencies rarely capture and report this data. The graphic also highlights that victims of interpersonal violence frequently feel stigma and shame and that these feelings also serve to contribute to the silencing of this violence. If substance use is involved in this violence it too further contributes to this silencing effect as individuals who have been assaulted while impaired from substance abuse rarely report the assault.



Violence Against Women and Girls in Lunenburg County

Poverty, a form of structural violence is experienced by many women in Lunenburg County. In Nova Scotia, as in most areas of the world, women have less access to income as noted previously (Morris and Gonsalves 2005). At the same time, as noted by the Lunenburg County Community Fund (2013), the number of children raised in lone-parent homes is greater than in married and common-law families and often these families have less income.

Cultural violence is defined by Galtung (1990) as "those aspects of culture, the symbolic sphere of our existence- exemplified by religion and ideology, language and art, empirical science and formal science –that can be used to justify or legitimize direct or structural violence". These intersections are sometimes subtle, but also pervasive. For example, in her fourth edition of her film titled *Still Killing Us Softly*, Jean Kilbourne (2010)

describes the ways in which the mainstream media relentlessly objectifies and silences women in advertising and challenges her viewers to think critically about popular culture and its relationship to sexism, eating disorders, and gender violence. Beyond the obvious differences in race and heritage, all women are exposed to the mass media in ways never experienced before. Young women are especially vulnerable to the impact of the media (Dowsett Johnston, 2011). Two films titled *Sext-Up-Kids* (CBC Doc Zone, 2012), and *Miss Representation* (The Presentation Project, 2011), an award-winning documentary, explore the under-representation of women in media and the emphasis on youth and sexuality as the measure of girls' and women's value. These two recent films depict sexism in popular culture.

Dines (2010: 163) in writing about the intersections of pornography and violence against women said:

> "we are so steeped in the pornographic mind-set that it is difficult to imagine a world without porn….it is affecting our girls and boys, as both are growing up with porn encoded into their gender and sexual identities. What is the impact? What we do know is that we are surrounded by images that degrade and debase women and that for this the entire culture pays a price".

Gilligan (2009) a Harvard professor and a leading violence expert also writes about the ways in which women are portrayed in popular culture and links this to the interpersonal violence they experience. He describes the perpetuation of limiting gender roles for both sexes in patriarchal societies as a form of cultural violence. He suggests that in patriarchal cultures men are violence-objects and women are sex-objects; men are war slaves and women are sex-slaves. This metaphor can be said to underlie much of social

media which perpetuates and promotes subtle (and not so subtle) aggressive posturing of men and the sexual objectification of women. This simplistic description of sex roles is quite literally seen in some countries at war in which girls have been conscripted as sex slaves and young men as warriors (Coulter, 2009).

Substance Abuse: Links to Interpersonal Violence

A growing knowledge base about the links of substance abuse with all forms of interpersonal violence contributes to the complexity of this analysis. A significant amount of Canadian and international literature links substance abuse with violence (Cole & Leukefeld, 2002; Najavits, 2002; Logan, Walker & Felitti, 2004; Adlaf, Begin & Sawka, 2005; Romito, Turan & DeMarchi, 2005; Guise, J. & Gill, J. 2007; Alexander, 2008; Brown, 2008; Covington, 2008; Mate, 2008; Purdon, 2008; Poole & Greaves, 2012). These authors write about the links between being a victim of prior violence, including sexual assault and childhood sexual abuse and other traumatic experiences with a subsequent vulnerability to substance abuse problems. While these links have been made among individuals who have sought treatment for substance abuse problems it is important to acknowledge that many individuals who have experienced prior trauma do not develop a substance abuse and/or addiction and not all people who do have had these experiences.

Among women who do develop a substance abuse and/or addiction problem, the links between stress, sexual violence and other trauma and subsequent mental health problems are staggering, pronounced and profound (Najavits, 2002; Hien, Cohen & Campbell 2005; Dabu, 2007;

Brown, 2008; Covington, 2008; Mate, 2008; Talbot, Chaudron, Ward et al. 2011). Women are more likely than men to drink alcohol in response to negative and stressful situations (Greenfield, Back, & Lawson, et al. 2010).

Women who are coping with a substance abuse problem are often silent about their prior experiences of violence. Their silence contributes to the lack of awareness about this issue (World Health Organization, 2010; Calogero, 2013).

Other authors, write more specifically about substance abuse as a risk factor that can heighten volatility in different contexts that can lead to committing acts of aggression; both verbally and physically as well as sexual assaults (Graham & Bernards, 2008; Graham & Livingston 2011; Parker & McCaffree 2013).

There is growing evidence to support the argument that among male perpetrators of violence who have a substance use problem, many may also have been prior victims of violence (Minerson, Carolo, Dinner & Jones, 2011; Poole & Greaves, 2012). Men's violence intervention programs that recognize these cyclic patterns are recognizing that a trauma-informed approach is best (Poole & Greaves, 2012).

A Police official in Bridgewater, the largest town in Lunenburg County, has acknowledged that substance abuse is frequently involved when he and his members respond to calls of distress (Personal Communication, 2012). In an email received on November 1, 2012, the Police official wrote: "I initiated an audit of our domestic violence related occurrences for the period 01 January 2012 to 01 November 2012…. In (55%) of these occurrences,

liquor was deemed by the investigating officers to be a contributing factor to the incident".

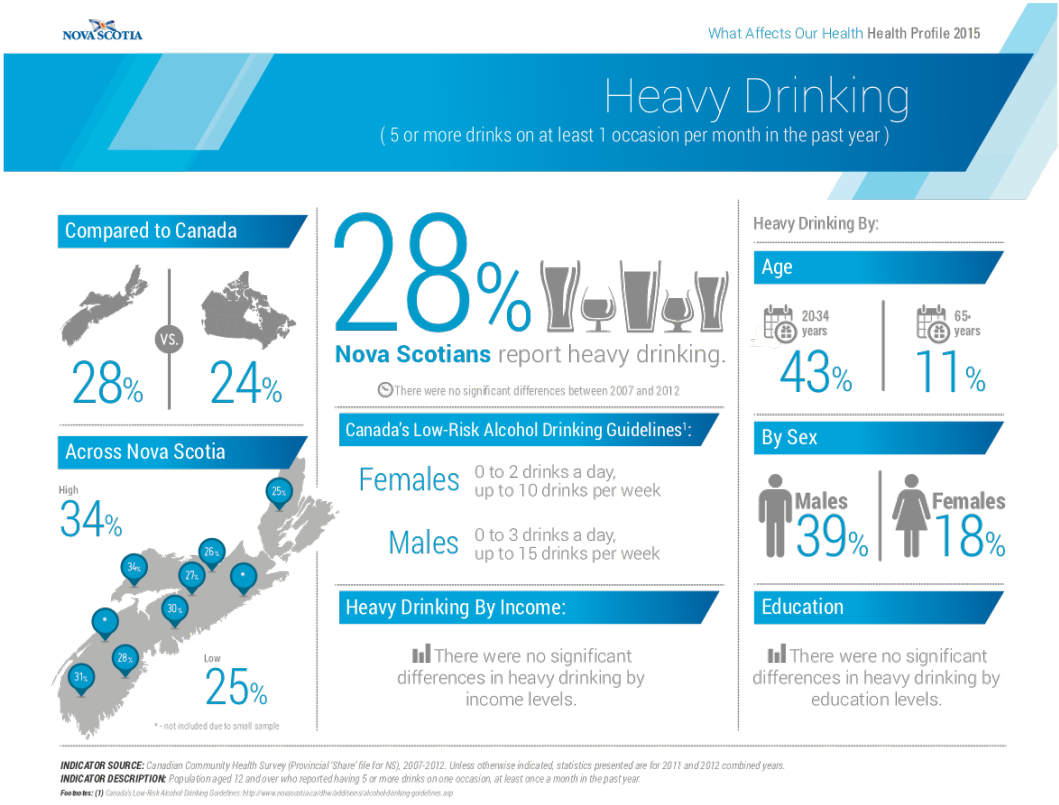
According to the Avalon Sexual Assault Centre's Annual Report (2012) alcohol consumption by both victim and/or perpetrator is a factor in the majority of sexual assaults, and in all cases involving girls who were sexually assaulted between the ages of 12-15 years. This acknowledgment of substance abuse as frequently linked with violence has led to discussions regarding consent. Several recent campaigns aimed at reducing sexual assault developed by the Battered Women's Support Services (2010) in British Columbia titled *The Violence Stops Here* point out that consent is not obtained if an individual is impaired.

A Mental Health and Addictions Epidemiological and Demographic Analysis of Nova Scotia concluded that addiction to prescription drugs is more common than addiction to illicit drugs. They note that while many youth use medications such as ritalin, amphetamines, and tranquilizers as a result of a prescription, recreational use of prescription medication is also high; particularly pain medications at a rate of 19.5% (Asbridge, Pauley, Langille, Kisely, & Whipp, 2011).

Of illicit drugs, cannabis use is the most widely used with 8% of adults reporting using it in 30 days prior to the survey. However, among youth 18% reported use of cannabis during the same period (ibid). In 2010, the prevalence of use of at least one of six drugs [including cannabis, cocaine or crack, speed, ecstasy, hallucinogens (excluding salvia) or heroin] in the past year was 11.0%. The rate of use by males at 15.0% was double that of females at 7.3% and the prevalence of use was three times higher among

youth at 25.9% as contrasted with the rate of adult use at 8.1% (Asbridge, et al. 2011).

Alcohol is the most commonly abuse drug in Nova Scotia. The following table copied from the first Nova Scotia Government's Health Profile (2015) provides an indication of the rates of heavy drinking. It noted that 28% of Nova Scotians report heavy drinking in the past month as contrasted with 24% nationally.



The Government of Canada's Canadian Tobacco Alcohol and Drugs (CTADS) report (2015) indicates that approximately 76% of Nova Scotians consumed alcohol in the past month. Heavy drinking can be harmful to others as indicated by the Nova Scotia Alcohol Indicators Report that estimated 237,270 Nova Scotians 18 years and older have been harmed by another person's use of alcohol (Graham, 2005).

While clearly a significant issue there is resistance to acknowledging that substance abuse may result from social problems and prior experiences of violence. Mate (2008) suggests that this reluctance indicates an abdication of work towards a more socially just society.

The Death of Rehtaeh Parsons

The high profile death of Rehtaeh Parsons, a seventeen-year old young woman who died as the result of suicide in April 2013 in her home near Halifax, Nova Scotia, has resulted in a provincial task force to review legislation related to sexual assault and social media. News about her death became widely known following her parent's decision to make public the details of the incidents leading to her decision to commit suicide. They claim that she was sexual assaulted by four young men, seventeen months prior to her suicide, when she was fifteen years of age and that following this assault digital pictures of it were circulated in the school she attended. All individuals involved in this incident were teenagers and all were reported to have consumed a large amount of alcohol. Following the distribution of images of this event Rehtaeh's parents report she was harassed and bullied. Rehtaeh's father, Glen Canning (2013) wrote a blog entry titled '*Rehtaeh Parsons was my daughter*' that went viral shortly after her death. As a result of the publicity and attention drawn to her death the provincial government initiated a substantial response. Following her death, numerous questions were raised about the nature of support she received from the justice, education, and health systems (Action Team on Sexual Violence and Bullying, 2013). In a report describing steps the province took to develop a better response to sexual assault they describe the appointment of Minister More to lead an

immediate response and longer-term action. This report recommended responding to the broader issues underlying the Parsons case that included sexual violence, youth mental health, bullying and cyberbullying, substance abuse, and changing societal norms and relationships. It recognized this response required “coordinated and combined services, public education, policy, and legislative effort to address meaningful change in the long term” (Action Team on Sexual Violence and Bullying, 2013: 1).

Minister Marilyn More led a consultation process across the province and sought the support of the Departments of Justice, Health and Wellness, Education and Early Childhood Development, and Community Services. In the aftermath of her death the mental health, education, police and justice response was scrutinized. The Nova Scotia Legislature enacted Bill Number 61, Cyber-safety Act to address and prevent cyberbullying just four months following her death (Nova Scotia Legislature, 2013).

The response to the death of Rehtaeh Parsons has provoked many difficult conversations and serves to demonstrate the complexity involved in addressing sexual assault and other forms of violence. It also serves to highlight that while local communities can initiate community-based responses there are other factors involved that necessitate provincial, national and global responses. The next section will describe what is currently being done to address violence against women and girls in Lunenburg County while acknowledging that the complexity of this issue demands a multi-layered response.

Lunenburg County's Response to Violence Against Women and Girls

Four provincial government departments that include justice; community services; health and education, fund and influence programming in Lunenburg County that responds to violence against women and girls.

The Department of Community Services is guided by the Children and Family Services Act that is an An Act Respecting Services to Children and their Families, the Protection of Children and Adoption (Nova Scotia Legislature, 1990). This department, with its' child protection mandate, investigates all calls reporting concern about a child's welfare. As such it is on the front-line of service to vulnerable children and families. In Lunenburg County this department funds a Family Resource Center; Harbour House, the local transition house for women; Alternatives, a men's domestic violence intervention program; Second Story Women's Center; the Sexual Health Center and Big Brothers and Big Sister's in addition to the department of community services. All these services provide a front-line response and frequently articulate that they are under-funded. For example, they all must host fundraising initiatives to supplement their efforts. These services also engage in violence prevention work. However, these prevention efforts are often isolated and uncoordinated.

The Department of Justice response consists of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), the Bridgewater Town Police, the provincial court system and community justice. This department also funds a 'High Risk Case Coordinator' and Victim Services. While there is a strong focus on incorporating restorative justice in the province; particularly among youth, community restorative justice approaches are not used in domestic violence

cases or in sexual assault. There has been a twenty-year moratorium on the use of restorative justice approaches in domestic violence cases because of fear that these approaches would not be implemented in a manner that could guarantee women's safety (Rubin, 2003). Therefore, the response of justice agencies to interpersonal violence is pro-charge and pro-arrest.

In Lunenburg County the South District Health Authority provides all government funded health care that includes addiction and mental health services and emergency response services. Within Lunenburg County there are two hospitals, one in the town of Lunenburg and a second larger hospital in the town of Bridgewater. There were no current designated sexual assault services as of 2015. However, this writer as a former employee of South Shore Health Addiction and Mental Health Services worked with many individuals who reported having been a prior victim of many forms of interpersonal violence that included physical assault, sexual assault and childhood sexual abuse. This information, as noted above, was not compiled in a way that could contribute to a report describing how many individual accessing these services were prior victims on interpersonal violence. In this way my work contributed to what is described later in this thesis, a public secret. This term expresses the ways in which systems may acknowledge and respond to the individual needs of people who had experienced prior violence but fail to politicize these issues and work towards prevention.

The Department of Education provides funding to the South Shore District School Board who in turn manage the delivery of services to schools within the Board. This Board has also initiated a program titled 'Schools Plus' that provides services to youth who experience interpersonal difficulties

in Junior and Senior High in Lunenburg County. Addiction and mental health services are also provided. Many different organizations offer programming related to healthy relationships and reducing interpersonal violence. However, they are uncoordinated and not consistently offered throughout the district.

The Be the Peace Project

The Status of Women Canada awarded Second Story Women's Centre located in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, significant funding for a three-year (2012-2015) project to reduce violence against women and girls by developing a coordinated community response to violence. This project engaged men and boys as well as women and girls. As a co-coordinator of this project for the first sixteen months and as co-writer of the application process I was very familiar with this project's goals and activities. This project was titled '*Be the Peace, Make a Change'* in recognition that peace in interpersonal relationships is everyone's responsibility. The intent of this project was to seek engagement of all community members and thereby avoid the dominant discourse about relationship violence that perpetuates the story of men as perpetrators and women as victims. This discourse frequently results in community violence seen as primarily a women's issue. This project addressed the range of institutional (and social) barriers and other factors that limit community efforts to tackle the issue of violence, including sexual assault, in rural communities. The project targeted the population in Lunenburg County. The '*Be the Peace'* project facilitated on-going meetings of community groups or 'peace teams' that came together to focus on themes identified by the larger community gatherings as being integral to

violence reduction. Two large community forums were held in the Town of Lunenburg. The first was held on July 5-7, 2012 with 151 people attending and the second community forum was held on April 19-20, 2013 with approximately 100 people attending. *Be the Peace* partnered with other organizations to support a '*One Billion Rising*' event held on February 14, 2013 with about 400 people attending at two different events held in the towns of Lunenburg and Bridgewater. A community public conversation event following the death of Rehtaeh Parson's was held in the town of Lunenburg and attended by 14 people. Following the identification of themes during the two large community forums the following twelve teams were formed: a community planning team; an interagency network collaborative; community restorative justice; gather the men; gather the women; gather the people; sexual assault service; youth and schools; neighbours, friends and families; substance abuse and violence; storytelling and/or story catching; and New Germany rural families. Many of these teams met monthly for over a year, but this number gradually reduced to a smaller number of teams as they became more focussed on specific areas (Bookchin, 2013). Many individuals engaged in this project agreed to be interviewed as a part of my research and may have had enhanced knowledge related to the topic of interpersonal violence as indicated by their involvement with the '*Be the Peace, Make a Change'* project.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have provided a portrayal of the range and extent of interpersonal violence in Lunenburg County and in the province of Nova Scotia, based on the limited and inconsistent data that is available. When

these rates are compared to the remainder of the country we learn that Nova Scotia has a slightly higher rate of sexual assault than average and a slightly lower rate of intimate partner violence (McInturff, 2013: 10). However, when portraying a national overview of these rates, McInturff (2013:10) indicates in her report for the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, they were based on the 2004 General Social Survey because the sample size for the 2009 General Social Survey was too small. This is illustrative of the difficulty in collecting comprehensive and reliable data in Nova Scotia and across the country and has been described as a barrier to making progress to ending violence (ibid). However, the data that does exist "tells us three things very clearly: this problem is big, it comes at a high cost, and we are making little or no progress in putting a stop to it" (McInturff, 2013: 9).

While I acknowledge the current efforts to respond to this violence in Lunenburg County in this chapter it is important to appreciate that these efforts, as elsewhere in Nova Scotia and Canada have been described as under resourced and lacking in coordination (Rubin, 2008; Flaherty 2010; McInturff, 2013). According to McInturff & Ravon (2014) the Canadian government spends an estimated $2.77 per person per year to lower the rates of violence against women within Canada. They claim that the levels of violence occurring in Canada were constant for the past decade, accounted for an estimated 25 per cent of all police-reported violent crime and dwarfed this financial support (ibid).

The following chapter explores literature related to the potential of a radical transformative peacebuilding approach to address the persistent high rates of interpersonal violence. Literature informing this approach will include

a broad analysis of structural and cultural influences on interpersonal violence that ultimately compel a collective community response.

Chapter Three: Literature Review

Violence against women “knows no boundaries of geography, culture or wealth. As long as it continues, we cannot claim to be making real progress towards equality, development and peace” (Kofi Annan, United Nations, 1999).

Introduction

“Global peacelessness” is a term that aptly describes the current state of the world in which more than 35% of girls and women have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence and one woman in four has been abused during pregnancy (United Nations Population Fund, 2005; Flaherty, 2010; World Health Organization, 2013).

When a women-centered lens is applied to measures of peace, a story emerges that depicts the world as an unsafe place in which all girls and women are vulnerable to harm at some point in their lives (Johnson 2005; Kristof & WuDunn 2009; Seager, 2009).

The harm that individuals experience because of exposure to violence is often multi-layered and personal. Victims of violence often feel disconnected and dislocated. Both violence and substance abuse flourish in contexts that promote alienation, dislocation and disconnection (Battiste, 2015; Blackstock, 2015; Curle, 1995,1999; Alexander 2008). Substance abuse, particularly alcohol abuse, is often a factor when violence occurs and is often used by victims to cope with the impact of violence (Najavits, 2004; Parker & McCaffree 2013). This use of alcohol can further compound a sense of disconnection and dislocation (Mate, 2008). An experience of

violence also harms relationships. For example, Galtung (2010:21), a leading peace theorist, writes: "Violence and war, conflict and peace, all have one thing in common: they are relational". It follows that building peace must also focus on mutuality or 'relationality' to others (Hiroshi, 2007; McCold, et al. 2007; Galtung, 2010; Downie & Lewellyn, 2011; Dietrich, 2012; Sinclair & Wilson, 2015). Peacebuilding must focus on the creation of environments that promote positive relationships.

In Canada, as in other countries, the creation of such environments cannot occur without acknowledging the history and current impacts of colonialism on both First Peoples and ‘settlers’. The Canadian government commissioned a *Truth and Reconciliation* report that points to concepts of relationality as central to reconciliation and building peaceful and respectful relationships. These authors write:

> Together, Canadians must do more than just talk about reconciliation; we must learn how to practice reconciliation in our everyday lives—within ourselves and our families, and in our communities, governments, places of worship, schools, and workplaces. To do so constructively, Canadians must remain committed to the ongoing work of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships (Sinclair & Wilson, 2015: 126).

This report calls on all Canadians to do the ongoing work of practicing reconciliation and building respectful relationships. This work involves listening to stories that can be full of pain, sorrow and regret. One woman’s experience was described in the report demonstrates that such listening can be powerful:

“By listening to your story, my story can change. By listening to your story, I can change” (Sinclair & Wilson, 2015: 123).

This thesis argues that approaches, policies and strategies to build peace must occur in a context that prioritizes relationships and recognizes incidents of interpersonal violence as threats to peace and the wellbeing of communities.

Creating environments that promote opportunities for all community members to flourish means not only ending experiences of sexual and gender-based violence but also paying attention to the conditions that enable all members to maximize their potential. Maslow’s (1954) hierarchy of needs has been used to demonstrate that when people are supported in this way, there is less likelihood that they will remain in abusive situations (Kline, 2010). Further, it has been noted that countries experience a pacifying effect if women have more equitable access to resources and power (Melander, 2005). Efforts to create safer environments must involve the transformation of societal, cultural and political systems that have enabled the perpetuation of violence against girls and women. Despite the growing recognition that broad and deep structural change is needed to reduce gender-based violence, current efforts to reduce interpersonal violence often focus on educational programs for both the perpetrators and victims of violence and are often reactive and limited in their analysis of the complexity that informs violent behavior (Augusta-Scott, 2007; Flaherty, 2010; Pease, 2014). Community-based efforts to reduce violence must involve coordination of community responses that move from a reactive focus on the individual to the broader systems that impact the lives of all community members. I argue

that ending interpersonal violence requires deep structural and cultural transformative change.

Overview of Chapter

The following literature review supports the claims made in this thesis, i.e. that both perpetrators and victims of violence live in socially constructed contexts, that are informed by cultural and structural violence that, in turn, contribute to direct violence. This thesis suggests that a focus on gendered dichotomies and the dominant discourses related to perpetrators and victims directs our gaze away from these broader factors to a focus on individual blame and responsibility. These discourses of responsibilisation direct our gaze away from colonialism, neoliberalism and the globalization that propels growth of dislocation and alienation (Alexander, 2008; Giroux, 2013; Liebenberg, et al. 2013). The transformative potential of peacebuilding approaches moves our focus from individual responsibility to include a wider analysis of social and cultural violence that compels a collective community response.

This chapter highlights intersections among three bodies of literature: (1) peace studies and conflict resolution; (2) the interpersonal anti-violence field and (3) the substance abuse and addiction field. These intersections are important for larger arguments made in this thesis, i.e. that substance abuse and high rates of addiction flourish in contexts that promote violence and, as such, are risk factors that contribute to violence. Efforts to reduce violence are ultimately about the creation of positive peace and ‘right relationships’, efforts that can be described as peacebuilding.

A review of the literature suggests that interpersonal and/or gender-based violence is not a personal or private matter. Rather, it is socially constructed and therefore influenced by social, political and cultural structures. I argue that a country cannot be described as 'at peace' while high rates of gender-based violence are perpetuated. Gender-based violence, when upheld as a human rights violation, becomes a political and legal matter. This thesis builds on the literature below to assert that the field of peace studies and conflict resolution has suffered from a gender blindness that has limited its potential to be influential in highlighting and connecting the deep structural and cultural changes necessary to create a safer world for girls and women, boys and men (Ramsbotham, et al. 2011; Woroniuk, 2001, Woodhouse & Santiago, 2012; Duvvury, 2009; Beever, 2010). This chapter will claim that the field of interpersonal anti-violence contributes to peace studies and conflict resolution through its sustained and considered gendered analysis of violence. It will also argue that substance abuse and addiction are linked to interpersonal violence. This chapter will highlight the transformative potential of a grassroots community-based peacebuilding framework when it is informed by both the substance abuse and addiction field and the interpersonal anti-violence field, all three of which permit greater complexity in addressing multiple cultural and structural factors that contribute to direct violence.

Theories of Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution

Peacebuilding: Key Terms

The term 'peacebuilding' originated in the field of peace research and the tradition of conflict resolution and is relatively new (Ramsbotham et al.

2011). One scholar described the current stage of peacebuilding study as "etymological adolescence"; it is "gangly and undefined" (Schirch, 2008:1). In 1976, Galtung coined the term in his pioneering work titled, "*Three Approaches to Peace: Peacekeeping, Peacemaking, and Peacebuilding*". These three approaches were later described as the macro strategies "that would holistically address the attitudinal, behavioural and structural characteristics of Galtung's conflict triangle (Ramsbotham et al. 2011), a theory that highlighted the interconnections between cultural and structural violence and direct violence (Galtung 1990). Ramsbotham et al. (2011:199) say peacebuilding "is most succinctly characterized as the project of overcoming structural and cultural violence (conflict transformation), in conjunction with peacemaking between conflict parties (conflict settlement) and peacekeeping (conflict containment)".

To expand on the above terms, direct violence refers to violence that harms a person individually. Structural violence refers to:

> "harm that happens without direct intent to hurt another and which can be detected by seeing patterns that diminish the potential to live a full and healthy life. Structural violence rises when social patterns, political structures and economic systems diminish, destroy and exclude people from access to basic life needs and greatly lower their potential for human flourishing" (ibid, 50).

Cultural violence as defined in the previous chapter refers to aspects in the culture that can be used justify or legitimize both direct or structural violence (Galtung, 1990).

Schirch (2008:2) describes peacebuilding as an umbrella term that encompasses all attempts to address conflict, violence and peace:

> "Peacebuilding seeks to prevent, reduce, transform, and help people recover from violence in all forms, even structural violence that has not yet led to massive civil unrest. At the same time it empowers people to foster relationships that sustain people and their environment."

This definition of peacebuilding, with its focus on the quality of the types of relationships that sustain people, fits with efforts to reduce relationship violence. These concerns emphasize an understanding of peacebuilding as originating within local communities as opposed to top-down approaches.

Heathershaw (2007) notes that peacebuilding is a contested concept, a "travelling concept," and suggests that it gains meaning as it is practiced in different contexts. When Heathershaw (2007) asked people to identify threats to peace in their communities, he found significant agreement between community leaders and members; both identified the lack of work opportunities, lack of resources, illiteracy, alcoholism and drug addiction as the most significant threats to peace. Political or security threats were not cited at all. This emphasis supports Galtung's critique of peacebuilding studies as focused on security matters, often at the expense of what is important to people at the community level, and thus corroborates his TRANSCEND approach to peacebuilding: "The focus is on peace, a relation between parties, not on security" (Galtung & Webel, 2007:14). Heathershaw (2007) ends his article by defining peacebuilding as a complex and intersubjective process of change entailing the legitimation of new relationships of power. This definition implies a social justice mandate and new equitable sharing of power. Intersubjective processes of change imply a symmetry in which both parties feel they belong in the process and have equal voice in ongoing dialogues and negotiation. To legitimize new

relationships of power, it is necessary that both parties also feel safe and respected.

Galtung's conflict triangle and the TRANSCEND model influenced the work of Ramsbotham et al. (2011:11) in addressing the often-complex and interconnected range of factors that contribute to ongoing social injustice: "We end direct violence by changing conflict behaviour, structural violence by removing structural contradictions and injustices, and cultural violence by changing attitudes". This means, first, that the priority is to establish personal safety and security. Second, addressing structural violence can entail looking at societal structures that result in individuals living in poverty. That may mean advocating for a standard of living that is above the poverty line and for affordable, safe and suitable housing options. Third, addressing structural violence calls for an examination of those 'deep structures' that contribute to the culture and often shape our perceptions and attitudes about issues of violence. For example, this may mean challenging cultural notions that a certain level of interpersonal violence is acceptable.

According to Ramsbotham et al. (2011) peacebuilding has become a central point of contention within the conflict resolution field. By 2010, many writers, including Galtung (as mentioned above) had voiced concern about labeling state-building and regime change interventions as peacebuilding, preferring to return to the original concept of peacebuilding "based on people to people, peacebuilding from below, and civil society led discourses" (See Peacebuilding from Below) (Ramsbotham et al. 2011: 233).

This thesis embraces this return to the original conceptualization of peacebuilding that supports the assumption that interventions to mediate

interpersonal violence and the cultural and structural factors that influence this violence are peacebuilding. This peacebuilding is relational and recognizes that civil society discourses are influential in shaping relationships. As Galtung (1990) suggests the inclusion of the concept of cultural violence in the field of peace studies adds complexity and invites the inclusion of other disciplines as is noted in this thesis focus on the fields of interpersonal violence and substance abuse and/or addiction. Galtung (1990) points out essential differences in the time relation of the three concepts of violence by noting direct violence can be viewed as an event, structural violence as a process and cultural violence as enduring over time. This distinction is helpful in recognizing the cumulative impact of culture throughout the lifespan.

This thesis also incorporates an understanding of the speed at which cultures can transform is now susceptible to the virtual explosion of access to the internet and a wide range of social media that is both local and global and plays a pivotal role in shaping relationships.

I argue that relational theory supports a return to the radical roots of conflict resolution and peacebuilding which aimed to promote environments in which all people could flourish and must now be imbued with a recognition of the myriad ways in which colonialism and current cultural practices, that include advances in technology, influence both our relationships and environments (Boulding, 1977; Curle, 1995; Mitchels, 2006; Galtung & Webel, 2007; Lederach & Lederach, 2010).

Colonialism: Truth and Reconciliation

Colonialism has been referred to as a form of structural and cultural violence that continues to impact all Canadians, even if this influence is denied (Battiste, 2015; Blackstock, 2015; Sinclair & Wilson, 2015).

Jiwani (2006: 3) argues that Canadian society "is deeply anchored in a history of violence and in that respect, replicates a pattern of dominance derived from and inscribed within a colonial legacy."

Vecchio & Lockard (2004: 64) state, "for more than five hundred years, colonialism, with its' norms of conquest, control, and exploitation, has been the hidden social program guiding institutional structures across the Western world". Tuhiwai Smith (2002) writes that imperialism frames the indigenous experience and is expressed by colonialism, "imperialism still hurts, still destroys and is reforming itself constantly" (Tuhiwai Smith, 2002: 19). Colonialism facilitated the expansion of imperialism to secure European control of the markets and capital investments, which necessarily meant securing and subjugating the indigenous populations (ibid). These writers, and others suggest that an overarching colonial structure is supported by sexism, racism, classism, homophobia and other oppressive social patterns that negatively impact the entire society (Tuhiwai Smith, 2002; Vecchio & Lockard, 2004; Jiwani, 2006; Czyzewski, 2011; Battiste, 2015; Blackstock, 2012 & 2015).

There is a growing recognition by 'settlers' in Canada of the negative impacts of colonialism on the lives of First Peoples, particularly related to the harm experienced by children forced to attend residential schools between

1876-1996. The closing of the schools did not bring the residential school story to an end as their legacy continues to this day.

> "It is reflected in the significant disparities in education, income, and health between Aboriginal people and other Canadians—disparities that condemn many Aboriginal people to shorter, poorer, and more troubled lives. The legacy is also reflected in the intense racism and the systemic discrimination" (Sinclair & Wilson, 2015: 104.)

While the impacts of colonialism are clearly seen, if one chooses to look, in the lives of First Peoples, what is far less apparent and/or recognized are the ways in which colonialism has impacted 'settlers'. In the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada report (2015: 17) colonialism is described as *"*an ongoing process, shaping both the structure and the quality of the relationship between the settlers and Indigenous peoples". Blackstock (2012: 9) believes "its destructive force extends past First Peoples, eroding the understanding of non-Aboriginal peoples and to diminishing the fundamental national values of democracy, freedom, justice, and dignity for all." Her statement is helpful in making clear that all Canadians are impacted by colonialism.

Lowman & Barker (2015: 1) point out that in Canada we like to think of ourselves as a peaceful nation that takes pride in being inclusive and accepting of difference and in this portrayal, they write "we lie by omission, because we do not talk about our country being built on the attempted destruction of many other nations". When reflecting on the magnitude of this destruction it is possible to make links between the violence of colonization to violence against girls and women and other forms of violence in our society. The word 'settler' is recognized by Lowman & Barker (2015: 3) as pointing to

“uncomfortable realizations, difficult subjects, and potential complicity in systems of dispossession and violence”.

The words of Reverend Stan McKay, of the United Church, who is also a Survivor of residential schools were recorded in the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* report. He believes that reconciliation can happen only when everyone accepts responsibility for healing in ways that foster respect. He said,

> “There must be a change in perspective about the way in which Aboriginal peoples would be engaged with Canadian society in the quest for reconciliation.... [We cannot] perpetuate the paternalistic concept that only Aboriginal peoples are in need of healing.... The perpetrators are wounded and marked by history in ways that are different from the victims, but both groups require healing....” (Sinclair & Wilson, 2015: 115).

Processes of reconciliation are described as necessary components to heal the relationship between First Nations and Canadian settlers. The commission indicates this process entails coming to terms with events of the past to resolve and overcome conflict to establish a respectful and healthy relationship. The report describes reconciliation this way:

> “reconciliation is about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this country. In order for that to happen, there has to be awareness of the past, acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behaviour.”

It is difficult for ‘settlers’ to acknowledge the harm that has been inflicted and to think about the ways in which they may be complicit. This

process is described above as a relational and healing process and as such, it can be emotional. A descendant of Survivors, Daniel Elliot described it this way when he told the Commission:

> "I think all Canadians need to stop and take a look and not look away. Yeah, it's embarrassing, yeah, it's an ugly part of our history. We don't want to know about it. What I want to see from the Commission is to rewrite the history books so that other generations will understand and not go through the same thing that we're going through now, like it never happened" (Sinclair & Wilson, 2015: 118).

Elliot is acknowledging that is difficult to look at the ways in which First Peoples in Canada are impacted by colonialism. Lowman & Barker, 2015: 23 suggest that while difficult it can open space for "thinking beyond this present colonial conflict, to a future defined by reciprocity, responsibility, and restitution".

Sinclair & Murray (2015: 126) urge Canadians to do more than just talk about reconciliation. They write:

> "we must learn how to practice reconciliation in our everyday lives—within ourselves and our families, and in our communities, governments, places of worship, schools, and workplaces. To do so constructively, Canadians must remain committed to the ongoing work of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships".

Reconciliation requires constructive action that involves a willingness to hear the stories of victims of systemic and structural and cultural violence, to work towards greater equity and social justice to enable the restoration and healing of relationships built on respect, truth and justice. "At stake is Canada's place as a prosperous, just, and inclusive democracy within that

global world" (Sinclair & Wilson, 2015: 126). While the impacts of colonialism have been devastating and continue to impact the lives of all Canadians the Truth and Reconciliation commission has initiated processes for social healing. This has helped contribute to both an individual and a collective sense of agency even within current structural and cultural constraints, that points to new possibilities and respectful relationships (ibid).

Relational Theory and Peacebuilding

Feminist scholars have challenged the "traditional image of the individualistic human self that rests at the core of much of liberal social and political theory" through their work in developing relational theory (Llewellyn, 2011:3). This work is aligned with the radical roots of peacebuilding noted above that emphasized a concern for the wellbeing of individuals, families and communities (Boulding, 1977; Curle, 1995; Mitchels, 2006; Galtung & Webel, 2007; Lederach & Lederach, 2010). Relational theorists point out that human connection is an essential component of a strong sense of self (Miller & Stiver, 1997). The core ideas of what is now called the relational-cultural theory suggest that women grow through and toward connection (Jordan, 2008). While this theory has been applied to women's experience, it is increasingly acknowledged that it may apply equally to men (Jordan, 2008). "Thus, contrary to the assertions of pop psychology titles like *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus* and *The Rules*, it is untrue that men and women think about their relationships in qualitatively different ways" (Carothers & Reis, 2012:13). This new perspective is slowly influencing our understanding of the importance of positive relationships for boys' and men's physical, psychological and social development. For example, Courtenay

(2000) proposes a relational theory of men's health from a social constructionist and feminist perspective. He suggests that gender norms restrict men's health practices and limit their ability to have healthy relationships, causing men's overall health to suffer.

The dislocation theory of addiction that is discussed further in this chapter and in Chapter Seven also supports relational theory and the importance of healthy relationships to human development. This theory argues that the loss of psychological, social and economic integration into family and culture are precursors to addiction and supports the need for psychosocial integration as an essential part of human wellbeing (Alexander, 2008; Mate, 2008).

Feminist relational theory supports a conception of peacebuilding that moves beyond a narrow focus on justice as merely an element or stage to an understanding of peacebuilding as creating sustainable, just social relationships (Llewellyn, 2012). Throughout this thesis I argue that it is the focus on the creation of sustainable and just cultural and structural factors that will result in the creation of just and sustainable social relationships.

Positive Peace

The term ‘positive peace’ is used to highlight the idea that building peace involves more than an absence of violence, a notion that has sometimes been referred to as a ‘negative peace’ (Galtung, 1996). A positive peace can be defined as the restoration of relationships, the creation of social systems that serve the needs of the whole population and the constructive resolution of conflict. Conflict resolution theorists are quick to point out that conflicts are inevitable in life; what is important, however, is the ways they are resolved (Ramsbotham et al. 2011). Therefore, peace does not mean the total absence of conflict but does mean that people learn skills to interact non-violently and manage their conflicts positively with respect to the interest of all concerned. Positive peace is not merely the absence of violence but is about the creation of socially just environments in which individuals can resolve their conflict non-violently and develop healthy relationships.

Peacebuilding From Below

Returning to the original concept of peacebuilding as a process based on people-to-people interactions entails an implicit valuing of relationships. Peacebuilding from below may be broadly defined as the practice of non-state actors utilizing various resources to create amicable relationships with national, ethnic, racial, religious or political others and to build a social structure that is able to promote a sustainable peace. The word “non-state actors” in this context means neither transnational corporations nor big international NGOs, but local, grassroots members of society or civil society actors (Hiroshi, 2007). Curle, the first professor of Peace Studies at Bradford

University in 1973, defined peace and conflict as a set of unpeaceful and peaceful relationships, and this focus on relationships as the subject of peace is definitive of his work (Woodhouse, 2010).

Mitchels (2006:20) also noted the movement away from top-down approaches in peace studies arising from "an understanding of the need for effecting relational change at the middle and grassroots levels". Mitchels (2006) built on Curle's academic work by bringing the literature on post-traumatic stress and peacemaking within the context of Curle's theoretical approach. Mitchels' research grew out of her concern that the impact of post-traumatic stress within the process of peacemaking following violent conflict had been given little attention (Mitchels, 2006:17). So often, the work of peacebuilding from below that takes place in local communities, and in virtual spaces is invisible. Her research and that of many other peace practitioners often render visible the concerns of people living in situations impacted by violence (Kaldor, 2003; Mitchels, 2006).

Wallace (2009) conducted an analysis of community-based and locally situated peacebuilding efforts of indigenous populations in Canada. He felt that such work by indigenous communities could revitalize our discursive practices and limited thinking about peacebuilding and conflict resolution, resulting in a greater appreciation of the transformative possibilities of grassroots community-based peacebuilding (Wallace, 2009:4). These possibilities will be explored in relation to interpersonal violence later in this chapter.

The Field of Interpersonal Anti-Violence

Intergenerational Costs of Violence

The costs to victims of interpersonal violence, while often invisible, are high. Romito and her colleagues (2005) found that women who experience violence at the hands of their partners are six times more likely to be depressed and four times more likely to use psychoactive drugs than women who do not have this experience. According to the World Health Organization (2013) violence experienced during pregnancy and early motherhood can affect the developing fetus and young child. According to Mate (2008: 204), the new science of epigenetics indicates "the early environment, consisting of both the prenatal and post-natal periods, has a profound effect on gene expression and subsequent adult patterns of behaviour". Campbell et al. (2009: 548) support Mate's claim about the importance of pre-natal and early childhood experience:

> "In humans, children of mothers who experienced stress during gestation or early life stress exhibit alterations in early motor development, anomalies in brain morphology, and an increased risk of developing a range of neuropsychiatric disorders, including attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, schizophrenia, depression, sleep disturbances, cognitive dysfunction, increased anxiety, and substance abuse disorders."

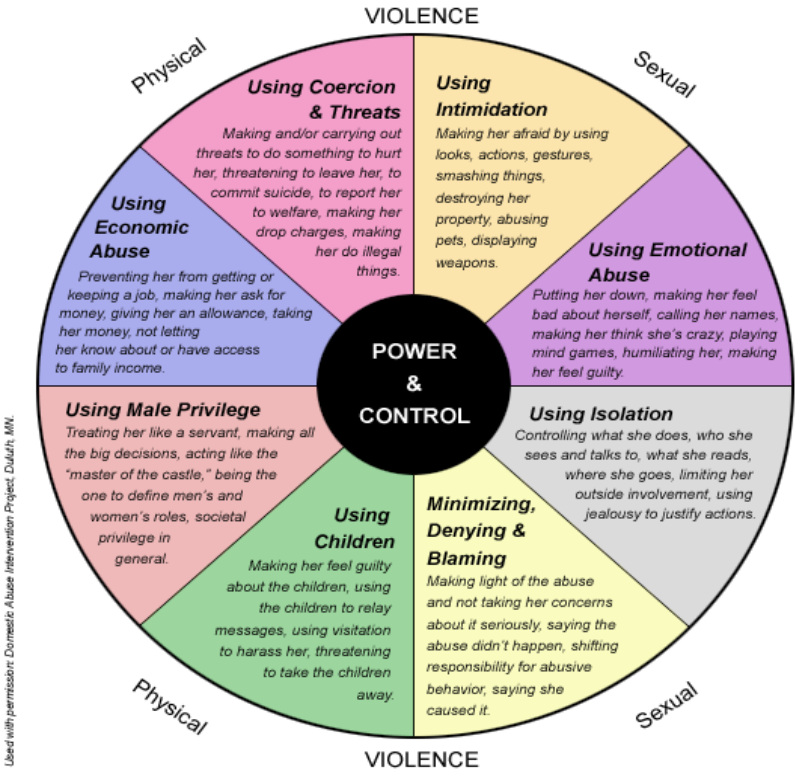
This research has profound implications for understanding the mechanisms often described as 'cyclic' that predispose individuals to perpetuate harm, violence and substance abuse. McGibbon & McPherson (2011) point out that it is now well recognized that biologic and genetic endowment, although influential in determining health, are not the major

determinants of the health of individuals, families, communities and nations. As described above, it is the environment and exposure to stress that influences gene expression, not biological endowment. Rather, equitable access to the social determinants of health and lives free from violence play the primary role in promoting wellbeing.

Many programs that provide interventions for individuals who have perpetrated violence are rooted in the need for individuals to take accountability and to make behavioral changes. As a result, they often fail to take into account the role of the environment, the social determinants of health and prior history of experiencing violence. I argue that such approaches, which center perpetrator individual accountability and de-center cultural and structural factors that are linked to violence are therefore narrow and limited in scope. One such program is *The Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (*DAIP), commonly referred to as the Duluth Model, which originated in the United States and is known internationally (Shepard & Pence, 1999; Hague & Bridge, 2008; Carlson & Jones, 2010; Barner & Carney, 2011; Herman et al. 2014).

The Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (DAIP)

In 1980, the *Domestic Abuse Intervention Project* (DAIP) was initiated in Duluth, Minnesota, and became widely known as a prominent model (see chart below) of a coordinated community response to violence (Shepard & Pence, 1999; Hague & Bridge, 2008; Carlson & Jones, 2010; Barner & Carney, 2011; Herman et al. 2014). Shepard and Pence (1999: 4) point out that this project's best known accomplishments have been the development



Domestic Abuse Intervention Project: Power and Control Wheel

of a mandatory arrest policy in the early 1980s and the creation of an educational curriculum for perpetrators of violence that focused on power and control as the purpose and function of violence. The tools developed by this program, including a visual power and control wheel, were helpful in defining components of violent behavior. This was particularly useful for individuals who normalized their experiences of violence in relationships due to recurrent experiences. Such normalization can result in a minimization or denial of violence, processes the power and control wheel serve to rebuff. This project's power and control wheel seen above, is a central element of training in this model. It is included here as representative of the ways many violence prevention programs depict violence as motivated by the perpetrators need or desire to exert power and control. I argue throughout

this thesis that such explanations are narrow and limited as evident by Shepard and Pence (1999: 26) understanding of violence as most often the result of psychological problems within the offender: “the way the man and the woman act as a couple and the way the offender understands the notion of relationships”. While it is important to recognize this model can be helpful in increasing awareness of violence, I argue it fails to incorporate an analysis of structural and cultural factors that contribute to direct violence and is therefore ineffective in promoting environments that encourage peace. Evaluations of this model have also substantiated that it has had limited success in lowering rates of interpersonal violence (Carlson & Jones, 2010; Herman, et al. 2014). Chapters Six and Eight include my use of the wheel that will centre a focus on the need to transform structural and cultural factors within a peacebuilding framework and de-centre a focus on individual power and control which I argue is limiting and narrow. This modification of the wheel radically changes the focus from one that examines individual motivations for violence based on power and control to one that examines the influence of structural and cultural influences.

Throughout this thesis, I argue that substance abuse and/or addiction is linked to violence and can also be best understood within a cultural and structural analysis. As noted above, the dislocation theory of addiction claims the loss of psychological, social and economic integration into family and culture are precursors to addiction (Alexander, 2008; Mate, 2008). I introduce this theory below and then move to demonstrate the ways in which substance abuse and/or violence are linked to interpersonal violence.

The Dislocation Theory of Addiction

The merits of the dislocation theory of addiction include its ability to look beyond individual morality and biology or pathology as origins of addiction to include a broad analysis of cultural and structural factors as contributing to the growth of addiction. In this section I discuss the advantages of this theory and at the same time provide some critique of other theories of addiction while recognizing that not all are mutually exclusive. For example, theories highlighting psychosocial complexity such as harm reduction and resilience address issues of risk and protective factors, that can complement the dislocation theory. Alexander's (2008: 29) explanation of the dislocation theory of addiction is based on this broad definition of addiction: "Overwhelming involvement with any pursuit whatsoever (including, but not limited to, drugs or alcohol) that is harmful to the addicted person, to society or both". This definition is broad because it recognizes that addiction can encompass behaviors such as gambling and internet addictions in addition to addiction to substances. In so doing, it does not refer to a medical or pathological problem but to "a state of a person as a whole" (Alexander, 2008: 36).

The dislocation theory of addiction states that "the loss of psychological, social and economic integration into family and culture [and] a sense of exclusion, isolation and powerlessness" are precursors to addiction (Mate, 2008:261). The first principle of this theory states "psychosocial integration is an essential part of human well-being, and that dislocation—the sustained absence of psychosocial integration—is excruciatingly painful" (Alexander, 2008:86). To highlight the importance of psychosocial integration to human

wellbeing, Alexander (2008) explores the writings of Polanyi (1944) to point out that the demoralization caused by colonialism was not primarily due to economic exploitation but arose from the destruction of cultures "without which people were individually, as well as collectively, shattered" (Alexander, 2008:91). To emphasize this position Alexander quotes Polanyi directly: "Robbed of the protective covering of cultural institutions, human beings would perish from the effects of social exposure; they would die as the victims of acute social dislocation" (Polanyi cited in Alexander 2008:91).

Acute social dislocation is experienced by refugees and others displaced by colonialism and war, and can sometimes result in increased rates of substance abuse and addiction. For example, the 2008 annual report of the Drug and Alcohol Recovery and Education (DARE) Network of Thailand noted that high numbers of Burmese refugees who suffer from addiction were residing in camps along the Thailand/Burmese border. The report estimated that 40-85% of Burmese living in these camps developed addictions to cope with daily traumas, poverty and extreme losses (DARE Network, 2008). This small, grassroots, non-profit organization noted important links between substance abuse and all forms of violence and displacement. This Network clearly framed both addiction and recovery from addiction as a form of resistance to violence and displacement. Ezard et al. (2011) also describe experiences of dislocation, displacement as the result of conflict, breakdown of cultural ties and a perceived lack of community support as contributing factors to a growth in addiction in their study that spanned six countries. While connections between displacement, trauma and loss with the development of a subsequent addiction may be understood

more easily among these populations, Mate (2008) and Alexander (2009) suggest similar processes involving psychosocial disintegration are occurring elsewhere and one need not be a political or war refugee to share in this experience.

In advancing the dislocation theory of addiction both Alexander (2008) and Mate (2008) suggest that increasing rates of addiction in Canada, and elsewhere, can be linked to a growing sense of alienation and disconnection that they claim is fueled by globalization and free market economies. Alexander (2008:60) writes about globalization resulting in dislocation that causes "poverty of the spirit". In his ongoing critique of the neoliberal globalized agenda he describes the myriad ways in which individuals compete for employment and financial success, ways that often result in their separation from family, community and culture. While it is not the intent of this thesis to present an in-depth analysis of the dislocation theory it is included here to indicate a broader conceptualization of the origins of addiction that are linked to historical, social, cultural and structural factors in current Canadian society, and elsewhere, that Alexander (2008) believes are contributing to an increase in psychosocial disintegration and subsequent addiction. To curb growth in addiction this theory points to structural and cultural change to promote psychosocial integration and a sense of belonging. In so doing this theory moves beyond individual explanations for the origins of addiction to emphasize the role of communities and the social and cultural environments that we co-create.

The two dominant models of addiction, which have shaped much of how addiction is understood both by those working in the field and in the

general public are limited in how they account for the relationship between alcohol abuse and the impact of cultural and social factors on individuals. These two models are commonly referred to as the moral or sceptical model and the medical model.

The moral views of addiction suggest that alcohol abuse and/or addiction are a result of a voluntary choice that can develop into an addictive pattern (Smith & Seymour, 2004; Alexander, 2008; Carter et al. 2009; Heyman 2009). This model of addiction fails to incorporate a broader understanding of the causes of addiction and aligns with the neoliberal emphasis on individual responsibility. United Kingdom alcohol policy experts Haydock (2014) and Mellows (2013) have written about the influences of neoliberalism in limiting the potential for effective health promotion strategies regarding the harms of alcohol. Haydock (2014: 262) defines neoliberalism as “a particular application of ‘governmentality’ as a mentality of government that emphasizes the ability of citizens to become autonomous.” He further qualifies this understanding of neoliberalism by underscoring three key features of the neoliberal approach. First, there is an emphasis on market rationality located in regulatory and state structures and in the mode of the ideal citizen. Second, for those citizens who do not perform as ideal members of society, “this approach to government focuses on ‘technologies of citizenship’ to shape people’s behaviour” (Haydock, 2014: 263). Here, Haydock references Foucault (1988:18) to explain that these technologies, rather than the regulatory environment in which people act, focus on the individual’s responsibility to make rational choices and exercise self-discipline if provided with the appropriate information. Finally, neoliberalism

holds that if individuals “fail to comply with the wishes of government, they are directly targeted with coercive measures, as they—rather than wider structures or organizations—are considered to have violated the neoliberal compact” (Haydock, 2014: 263). Within neoliberal capitalist contexts, individuals are held responsible to make informed decisions and healthy choices (Scourfield & Welsh, 2002; Lupton, 2005; Gillingham, 2006; Swadener, 2010; Liebenberg, Ungar & Ikeda, 2013). Neoliberal and postfeminist theories suggest that agency is exercised by making informed and healthy individual choices (Gill, 2008; O’Neill, 2015). In other words, the individual is responsible for minimizing personal risk (Scourfield & Welsh, 2002; Lupton, 2005; Gillingham, 2006; Swadener, 2010; Liebenberg, Ungar & Ikeda, 2013). Failure to make rational choices as implied by substance abuse and addiction are then perceived as individual failures and contribute to stigma and the criminalization of addiction. Such understandings of substance abuse and/or addiction preclude a wider focus on the environment and on the bio-psychosocial stress that individuals may experience.

The medical model describes addiction as a psychiatric disorder and/or disease that requires treatment (Smith & Seymour, 2004; Mate, 2008; Carter et al. 2009). Adherents of this model are quick to point out that our understanding of the origins of addiction are evolving and new, richer paradigms may emerge. Popular acceptance of this model was boosted by Alcoholic Anonymous (AA) which states in the introductory chapter of the *Big Book of Alcoholic Anonymous* that the disease of alcoholism is described as an allergy of the body and a compulsion of the mind (Smith & Seymour, 2004:13). The main strength of the medical or disease model is a movement

away from penalizing the individual to the provision of therapeutic treatment programs. Most of the criticism of this model arises from a belief that addiction needs to be understood more broadly as a societal, political and economic problem. For example, feminists note that medicalized programs fail to appreciate the complexity of most addicted women's lives because they often fail to acknowledge that many women seeking addiction treatment have suffered past trauma and may be single parents living in poverty (Kasl,1992; Brown, 2008). Such critiques of both the moral and medical approaches to substance abuse and/or addiction have been influential in the evolution of treatment approaches. While the dislocation theory places an emphasis on the need for systemic and cultural changes to decrease rates of addiction the need to provide treatment support for individuals within contexts that may not always be supportive of psychosocial integration remains. Several therapeutic and supportive approaches recognize individual agency and ability to make better choices even within the constraints of interlocking structural and cultural factors. These approaches appreciate individual strengths, creativity, resilience and ability to resist oppression. They are often strengths-based and focus on goals that are determined by the individual. For example, motivational interviewing originated within the field of addiction and includes approaches that support self-efficacy and autonomy (Hohman, 2012).

Resilience is now largely defined within an ecological perspective that recognizes individual capacity and the need for communities to provide support. Unger and Liebenberg, 2011) define resilience this way:

> I. The capacity of individuals to navigate their way to resources that sustain well-being;

II. The capacity of individuals' physical and social ecologies to provide those resources; and
III. The capacity of individuals, their families and communities to negotiate culturally meaningful ways for resources to be shared.

This definition acknowledges individual capacity while emphasizing that resilience is dependent on supportive environments and not solely on individual character traits. It implies that the risk of developing a substance abuse and/or addiction can be mitigated by access to resources and supportive people. Concepts of resilience contribute to our understandings and responses to addiction by providing psychosocial complexity that can complement the dislocation theory.

Harm reduction approaches to substance abuse and/or addiction also recognize individual agency and the support that can be provided within health care settings to help reduce risks of harm to self and others. These approaches can "shift the moral context of health care delivery and enhance access to health care services" (Pauly, 2008). However, harm reduction with a primary focus on reducing the harms of alcohol and/or drug use often fails to focus on the harms associated with the context of drug use such as homelessness, violence and poverty.

In this section I presented a brief overview of the dislocation theory of addiction, some critique of other theories and noted that not all are mutually exclusive. Several theories and approaches that include theories of resilience, motivational interviewing and harm reduction highlight psychosocial complexity that can complement dislocation theory. The following section explores connections between substance abuse and violence and ways in which the dislocation theory links to both.

Substance Abuse and Violence

According to a World Health Organization (2011) document that examined research on prevention of interpersonal violence and sexual assault, harmful use of alcohol and illicit drug use are commonly cited as risk factors that should be considered in prevention plans. This recommendation is supported by researchers who identify substance abuse as a risk factor that can heighten volatility in different contexts, which in turn can lead to aggression—both verbal and physical—as well as sexual assaults (Graham & Bernards, 2009; Graham & Livingston, 2011; Parker & McCaffree 2013).

Parker & McCaffree (2013) take deliberate and detailed steps to highlight research conducted in the past twenty years that demonstrates a close connection between alcohol and violence. Gil-Gonzalez et al. (2006) cite one systematic review of pooled results of 11 studies that found that harmful use of alcohol was associated with a 4.6-times increased risk of exposure to intimate partner violence compared with mild or no alcohol use. However, despite the growing body of evidence Gil-Gonalez et al. (2006) caution against making a causal association between harmful use of alcohol. While establishing a causal link may require more research, there is sufficient evidence to warrant including alcohol policy interventions as a factor in community peacebuilding efforts that aim to reduce interpersonal violence (Graham & Bernards, 2009; Babor, et al. 2010; Graham & Livingston, 2011; Parker & McCaffree, 2013).

Alcohol policy interventions have primarily consisted of broad societal measures that can include raising the price of alcohol and reducing the density of alcohol outlets (Babor, et al. 2010). However, a growing amount of

research indicates that individuals who are most susceptible to substance abuse and/or addiction are those who have experienced severe forms of displacement, disconnection and alienation as noted above (Alexander, 2008; Mate, 2008). Often these experiences have come in the form of trauma and various forms of violence and indicate a need for trauma-informed community alcohol policy measures (Logan, et al. 2002; Najavits, 2002; Felitti, 2004; Adlaf, Begin & Sawka, 2005; Romito, et al. 2005; Guise & Gill 2007; Alexander, 2008; Brown, 2008; Covington, 2008; Mate, 2008; Purdon, 2008; Poole & Greaves, 2012). Najavits (2002) looked at gender differences in the experience of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and found that women in treatment for substance abuse were two to three times more likely to have a diagnosis of PTSD than men who are in treatment for substance abuse and that their PTSD was largely the result of sexual abuse and domestic violence. Romito and her colleagues (2005) found that women who experience violence at the hands of their partners are six times more likely to be depressed and four times more likely to use psychoactive drugs than women who do not have this experience. Among women who seek treatment for substance use problems the links between stress, sexual violence and other trauma and subsequent mental health problems, substance abuse and/or addiction are staggering, pronounced and profound. These connections in my own work over the past twenty years with women at Addiction and Mental Health Services in Nova Scotia and are corroborated by many researchers (Navajits, 2002; Hien et al. 2005; Brown, 2008; Covington, 2008 & Poole & Greaves, 2012). Norris et al. (2002) conducted a meta-analysis that found women to be twice as likely to develop PTSD after

a traumatic event and the chronicity of symptoms for women to persist up to four times longer than for men.

It is important to emphasize that many individuals who have had these experiences do not develop a substance use problem or an addiction. As noted briefly above, many individuals are resilient and it may be that factors in their environment or a support system help them through difficult times.

However, a growing amount of Canadian and international literature describe links between being a victim of violence, including sexual assault and childhood sexual abuse, and subsequent vulnerability to substance abuse problems among individuals who seek assistance for these problems (Logan, et al. 2002; Najavits, 2002; Felitti, 2004; Adlaf, Begin & Sawka, 2005; Romito, et al. 2005; Guise & Gill 2007; Alexander, 2008; Brown, 2008; Covington, 2008; Mate, 2008; Purdon, 2008; Poole & Greaves, 2012). It is important to avoid generalizations that assume these connections. Not everyone who is a victim of violence becomes vulnerable to developing a substance abuse problem. More research is needed to increase the capacities of communities to encourage resilience.

When individuals do abuse substances following a traumatic experience(s) a trauma informed approach is helpful in recognizing this may be a form of coping and not solely about making bad choices. A significant contribution of trauma-informed perspectives has been to position 'helpers' to ask 'what happened to you' as opposed to exploring 'what is wrong with you' (Haskell, 2012). As such, this perspective challenges more narrow moral and medical approaches to substance abuse and addiction. A trauma-informed lens can move our understanding of addiction from individual

pathology to an appreciation of the ways it can be understood as an adaptive response. This approach is helpful in assisting individuals to recognize their strengths and resilience.

Alexander's (2008) writings about dislocation have many connections to the work of Curle (1971,1995,1999; discussed above), who described violence as related to social disconnection and cultural disintegration. Curle (1995:16) wrote: "Alienated people have a damaged sense of relatedness to others, and so are particularly prone to unpeaceful relations and violence," and further, "relationships of alienation exist when one party to the relationship feels and acts as though he were the underdog in an unbalanced/higher-awareness relationship while the other feels and acts as though he were engaged in a peaceful relationship" (Curle 1971:15). In 1999, almost three decades later, Curle expanded his understandings of alienation: "The speed and universality of change has created a widespread sense of alienation. The convulsions of our age have made us psychological nomads, not really belonging anywhere: aliens, in fact" (Curle 1999:25). Curle (1999) notes the loss of social rules that helped tell us we were standing on solid ground and gave us a sense of identity. He wrote about the ubiquitous nature of violence on a global scale fuelled by "increasing interacting worldwide forces of economic, political and military power: a global culture of violence" (Curle, 1999: 5).

Historical and current sociological discussions regarding the concept of anomie also make similar points to those of Polanyi (1944); Curle (1971, 1999); Alexander, (2008) and Mate (2008). Social anomie is described as a state of normlessness that can emerge from a lack of social control (Irmak &

Cam, 2014). Recent literature links the concept of anomie to unregulated globalization and subsequent rapid change and economic dominance (Hovermann et al. 2015; Levchak, 2015). Hovermann et al. (2015: 409) describe institutional anomie theory as an expansion of anomie theory that defines “unfettered striving for success in capitalist society as a core component of an anomic culture leading to deviant behavior”. These writers claim that high rates of violent crime may occur in neoliberal capitalist market economies where the economy dominates those institutions that are not oriented to economic gain such as institutions of education, family or the political system (ibid). “The consequence is an imbalance in the institutional order (the so-called ‘institutional balance of power’) at the structural level and anomie in terms of a new “ethic” that furthers the limitless striving for achievement at the cultural level” (Hovermann et al. 2015: 409). Anomie is understood as a product of the culture of modern capitalism and as such is linked to concepts of alienation, dislocation and violence (Polanyi, 1944; Curle, 1971, 1999; Alexander, 2008; Mate, 2008; Irmak & Cam, 2014; Hovermann et al. 2015; Levchak, 2015).

Curle (1999) can be seen to share Alexander’s (2008) critique of neoliberal globalized agendas in his commentary about recent changes in the world that he believes, have profoundly altered us and, in fact, altered our humanity. He writes: "the concentration on materialism, on profit, suggests the comparable emotional need. There is much distress to compensate for and the misapplied drive for happiness is very powerful and very widespread" (Curle, 1999:26). Curle’s (1999) explanations regarding the origins and growth of violence share Alexander’s critique of globalized capitalism that he

believes is central to increased addiction rates. Both these writers link violence and addiction to the influence of social contexts.

This section has briefly explored literature that linked increasing rates of addiction and violence with dislocation, alienation and anomie (Polanyi, 1944; Curle, 1971, 1999; Alexander, 2008; Mate, 2008; Irmak & Cam, 2014; Hovermann et al. 2015; Levchak, 2015). It includes a brief description of the ways in which neoliberalism emphasizes the autonomy of individuals to make healthy and informed choices in ways that can obscure the constraints of interwoven cultural and structural factors noted above.

Social Healing concepts that are explored later in this chapter move from a focus on individual healing to a focus on collective healing that is relevant to reducing both violence and substance abuse and/or addiction. These are preceded by a discussion of the ways in which these concepts are informed by ideas of constructivism in the next section.

Deconstructing the Social Construction of Gender and Violence

Have the rates of violence against women and girls remained stubbornly high as a result of the failure of boys and men to engage with this issue (Katz, 2006; Singer, 2012)? Only within the past decade have men begun to engage in significant initiatives to reduce violence against women (Katz, 2006). Singer (2012) points out that this prior lack of engagement of men may be in part a response to the feminisms of the 1970s and ‘80s that shaped the dominant discourse on domestic violence still prevalent today. Second-wave feminists have been critiqued for creating "a political framework in which the respective categories ‘women’ and ‘men’ are sharply drawn as ‘victim’ and ‘enemy’" (Stringer, 2009: 24). This dominant discourse

involved a dichotomous thinking that inferred violence against women reflects men's desire to control women within a patriarchal world in which abusers are always male "and unremittingly violent, while the victim is always female and frequently helpless" (Singer, 2012: 120). Both Singer (2012) and Augusta-Scott (2007) argue that this discourse has become a grand narrative that encourages gender essentialism. The danger of such a single, all-encompassing story is that those who stand in contradiction are dismissed as false, imperfect or inadequate (Stanley & Wise, 1993; Adichie, 2009). Augusta-Scott (2007) points out that such grand narratives can negate stories that deviate from it; for example, it can prevent us from seeing men as capable of both abusive and loving behavior. Acceptance of this grand narrative has contributed to our society's dualistic approach to violence: the victim requires safety and the perpetrator punishment. Prevention and education efforts based on this narrative and aimed at reducing violence against women have been described as reactive and intermittent, poorly funded and lacking in coordination (Flaherty, 2010). For example, the Canadian response to fathers who have been violent with their families, particularly within child welfare settings, has been critiqued for failing to hold men accountable for their actions and placing most of the responsibility for children's safety with women (Coates & Wade, 2003; Strega et al. 2013). When men are held responsible for their violent behavior, it sometimes results in prison sentencing and/or periods of probation. This response has also been critiqued as not offering possibilities for healing and the restoration of relationships, particularly if it is the only response to the perpetrator of violence (Clute, 2010; Singer, 2012). Such critiques of this grand narrative,

together with critiques of criminal justice responses to violence, signal a need to look deeper. The complexity of violence against women requires multi-dimensional responses.

The literature that examines the ways in which 'masculinities' are socially constructed points to such responses (Bly, 2004; Katz, 2006; Minerson et al. 2011). For example, understanding men's violence against women as a men's issue that is related to the social construction of masculinity can serve as an impetus to develop new approaches (Katz, 2006; Barker, 2005; Gilligan, 2009; Minerson, et al. 2011). Connell (2005) believes the term masculinity in its modern use is derived from the individualism of Europe that evolved with the growth of colonialism and capitalism. Therefore, in the sense that it is used today, masculinity is quite a novel concept. Connell (2005) describes masculinity as a relational term always defined in opposition to femininity. Masculinities, the plural term, indicates that masculinities are multiple, with internal complexities and contradictions evolving over time (ibid). Connell (2005) suggests that women have a considerable role in defining masculinities through their interactions with boys and men. Masculinities are not equivalent to men but, rather, relate to the position of men in a gender order and are defined as the patterns of practice by which people (both men and women, though predominantly men) engage that position.

The literature that explores 'masculinities' begins to address the huge gap in our knowledge about how masculinities are constructed and performed (Coulter, 2009). Katz (2006) explains that boys grow up in a world that narrowly scripts what it means to be a man. He suggests that social

media, political power and other cultural factors powerfully define an acceptable code of behavior for boys that propels them to be ‘tough’, ‘strong’ and ‘in control’. To deviate from this social code of behavior is to be viewed as less than ‘manly’ (Katz, 2006).

For example, the Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness (2012) held a public forum in Truro, Nova Scotia, titled ‘Boys, Men and Masculinities’ and invited a variety of people who do work with boys and men and on the subject of masculinities. The report from this forum indicated the following about the kinds of messages participants believed boys receive about what it means to be a boy or a man: “Don’t be gay; Don’t feel sorry”; “Be cool around women”; “Hook-up or pick-up, sleep around”; “Have a bad boy or player image”; “Be aggressive”; “Talk loud, be obnoxious”; “Be brave; Drink lots of alcohol”; “Have a big body (tall, muscular)”; “Sexually perform, be interested in sex”; “know how to have sex.” These powerful messages socially construct a narrow definition of ‘manhood’ that can isolate those boys and men who do not conform to these norms (Vandello & Cohen, 2003; Katz, 2006; Porter, 2006; Minerson et al. 2011; Dienes, 2014). This pressure may be felt more strongly in rural contexts like Lunenburg County in which traditional gendered scripts can remain quite entrenched (Dienes, 2014). I argue that ending interpersonal violence and specifically violence against women challenges entrenched cultural and structural factors that are upheld by patriarchal, heteronormative and colonial systems that perpetuate gendered stereotypes embedded in neoliberal capitalism (Bern, 2001; Nixon & Tutty, 2010).

Work which explored the impact of 'hypersexualization' on youth in Nova Scotia points out that sex sells, but the price we pay is steep and includes poor mental and emotional health outcomes; poor sexual health outcomes; poor physical health outcomes; poor education and career outcomes; increased incidence of violence and crime (intimate partner and sexual violence, child sexual abuse and exploitation and the perpetuation of oppression (homophobia, sexism and transphobia) (Tobin 2012).

The literature reviewed in this section contends that masculinities are socially constructed and promote gendered stereotypes that are linked to the ways in which violence can be more generally perceived as socially constructed and fueled by patriarchal, heteronormative and colonial systems that are embedded in neoliberal capitalism (Bern, 2001; Nixon & Tutty, 2010).

In an interview of Dines conducted by Emanuele (2012) she refers to Anthony Gramsci's writings in *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, 1971. She links his insights regarding cultural hegemony that seamlessly ties together a way of thinking about the world that fits into various industries. Further, she suggests that many industries work together to construct an image of women, sexuality, masculinity, and hypersexuality that reveals a very coherent narrative: "men are by nature sexually predatory–that's the message. Women are increasingly conforming to that image of what men are being shaped to enjoy" (in Emanuele 2012: 1).

Gilligan (2009), a Harvard professor and a leading violence expert, also writes about the ways in which women are portrayed in popular culture and how this is linked to violence. As noted in Chapter two, he describes the

perpetual limiting of gender roles for both sexes in patriarchal societies as a form of cultural violence and suggests that in patriarchal cultures men are violence-objects and women are sex-objects. Gilligan's metaphor can be said to underlie many social media images that perpetuate and promote subtle (and not so subtle) aggressive posturing of men and the sexual objectification of women.

Two events in Nova Scotia demonstrate the need for social and cultural change. The provincial government attempted to respond to the high profile death of Rehtaeh Parsons (who committed suicide in April 2013, seventeen months after she alleged that four young men sexually assaulted her) by assigning a high-level government task force. In the wake of Parsons' death, the provincial task force highlighted the need to make broad changes in cultural and societal norms that influence relationships (Action Team on Sexual Violence and Bullying, 2013). Parsons's death has provoked many difficult conversations and serves to demonstrate the complexity of violence. Following another high profile incident in the fall of 2013 in which students at Saint Mary's University in Halifax used 'rape chants' during 'frosh week' events, a report cited the need to build a foundation to begin cultural change (Saint Mary's University President Council Report, 2013).

Social media, pornography, and other cultural factors powerfully define behavior for all boys and particularly for boys of color (Dines, 2010; Katz, 2006). Visible minorities are often depicted in negative ways as is indicated the research of James et al. (2010) who maintain that African Canadian males, experience the violence of racism and that these experiences, negatively intertwine with notions of what it means to be a man.

Minerson et al. (2011) speculate that the portrayal of violence in our mainstream culture (in media, sports, etc.) serves to normalize the idea that violence is a part of what it means to be a man and an acceptable way to resolve conflict. In an assessment of worldwide programs that engage men and boys in the prevention of sexual assault, Ricardo et al. (2011) write: "It is increasingly understood that men's use of violence is generally a learned behavior, rooted in the ways that boys and men are socialized".

Synthesis: Social Healing Concepts

The above review of current literature on interpersonal violence and substance abuse suggests that new theoretical and practical approaches to reducing violence are required. This section describes key concepts related to broader ideas of social healing to avoid repetition of "concepts" that move from a focus on individual healing to suggest that communities attempting to reduce interpersonal violence may be more effective when introducing measures that engage in social healing (Lederach & Lederach, 2010; Thompson & O'dea, 2011). According to Thompson & O'dea (2011) social healing transcends focus on human transgressions as a battle between the dualities of good and bad to a focus on issues of relatedness between individual and collective wounding and healing. Therefore, social healing explores how individuals, groups and nations heal from past and present wounds. The following sections include a range of theories that are relevant to the broad category of social healing which is a necessary component of ending interpersonal violence in Lunenburg County.

Social Healing

Due to their focus on restoring fairness and justice, Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King have been described as forerunners of the movement toward a healing paradigm in the social domain (O'Dea, 2005). This healing paradigm has been referred to as social healing and has been described as an emerging field within a number of disciplines related to creating more peaceful communities (Lederach & Lederach, 2010; O'Dea, 2005; Thompson, 2006). Social healing has been defined as "an evolving paradigm that seeks to transcend dysfunctional polarities that hold repetitive wounding in place" (Thompson & O'Dea, 2011). According to Thompson (2006:11) this paradigm:

> "uses a relational healing lens through which to view conflict transformation and peacebuilding. It addresses the ways in which people and groups have been harmed through structural and direct violence, and seeks to discover the means to heal the destructive psychological and social consequences of that wounding".

Lederach and Lederach (2010: 208) focus on both communities and individuals in their suggested definition of social healing:

> "Social healing represents the capacity of communities and their respective individuals to survive, locate voice and resiliently innovate spaces of interaction that nurture meaningful conversation and purposeful action in the midst and aftermath of escalated and structural violence."

This broad definition of social healing encompasses many disciplines that focus on healing of individuals from previous violence and includes trauma-informed and restorative approaches (discussed below). These approaches focus on individual and relational healing. This definition also

includes wider cultural and structural healing that moves beyond a focus on individuals and relationships to encompass communities. This form of healing may include reconciliation, peacebuilding and educational development “for addressing and transforming collective social wounds” (Fetzer Institute, 2005). These approaches synthesize findings from the interpersonal antiviolence and the peacebuilding fields. As indicated above, such approaches are relevant to the dislocation theory of addiction, which also suggests that substance abuse and addiction develop in contexts that promote alienation and disconnection. Social healing approaches aim to promote contexts that facilitate connection and dismiss as delusion the idea that human beings are separate (Thompson & O’dea, 2011).

Therefore, social healing encompasses and can synthesize knowledge from the interpersonal violence and substance abuse and addiction fields and continue to contribute to what is described as an evolutionary edge of peacebuilding (Lederach & Lederach, 2010 & Thompson & O’dea, 2011). I argue that the concept of social healing is an antidote to the individualism inherent in neoliberal capitalist societies and implies a collective sense of agency that is transformative.

Safety, Belonging and Voice

Lederach and Lederach (2010) write metaphorically to describe what is often indescribable: the impact of violence on individual lives. They have written about individuals who have experienced violence in several different contexts in the world, including women who have experienced sexual assault in the United States and men and women who have experienced violence in Africa and South America. These researchers believe there are

commonalities among experiences of violence that “often boils down to three framing challenges which are found over and over again, expressed as daily realities in local communities in protracted conflicts: displacement, insecurity and voicelessness” (Lederach & Lederach 2010: 58). Lederach & Lederach (2010) describe the personal ramifications of being displaced as “akin to the lived experience of feeling lost, in large part because ‘I cannot locate myself’ in the experience” (Lederach and Lederach, 2010:61).

Individuals who have experienced prior violence and perhaps multiple traumatic events often do not feel safe (Najavits, 2002). This recognition led Lederach and Lederach (2010) to conclude that acquiring safety is a necessary step for people and communities recovering from violence:

> “safety is not only finding a way to assure physical security but also expresses the search to find a way to feel at home in the world, to feel once again a sense of being surrounded by love and acceptance, such that it is possible to trust oneself, one’s immediate family, others and the wider social landscape. Safety is Container” (Lederach & Lederach, 2010: 64).

Voicelessness, the third impact felt by many in post-conflict settings, is described as losing touch with a sense of personhood:

> “As a metaphor, when a person no longer has a sense of voice they experience a loss of humanity. Voicelessness at this level suggests a falling out of touch with meaning and the disappearance of significance. Voicelessness creates the experience of being numb, without a capacity to feel, to touch or to be in touch” (Lederach & Lederach, 2010: 66).

This description of voicelessness is quite striking in its emphasis on the loss of emotional connection that occurs as a result of experiencing violence or as a result of trying desperately not to feel the painful emotions that victimization

stirs. Such attempts to quell memories and feelings are also common among many individuals who struggle with substance abuse, as noted previously (Mate, 2008; Poole & Greaves, 2012).

This brief summary of the impacts of violence on both individuals and communities indicates that enhanced responses to violence and conflict should include processes that are sensitive to gendered power dynamics, the recognition of the importance of steps needed to assure safety for victims and the need to encourage a sense of belonging (Lederach & Lederach, 2010). If these prerequisites are met victims of violence may feel encouraged to express 'their voice' as part of transformative conflict resolution processes and grassroots community peacebuilding (Lederach & Lederach, 2010).

The concept of peace psychology, described below, supports a focus on social healing and suggests that conflict resolution and community peacebuilding are aligned with novel social approaches to promote individual healing. These approaches involve facilitating and sharing experiences rather than a focus on individual psychotherapy. They involve recognition that victims of violence actively resist violence and that their resistance is often silenced. The work of the Response-Based Practice Center, also described below, highlights the importance of learning about the ways in which victims resist violence. Both peace psychology and response-based practice support the importance of elevating the voices of victims of violence as necessary steps in community peacebuilding.

Peace Psychology: Victims are 'Participant Citizens'

The writing and theories that have evolved from the work of the Response-Based Practice Center and peace psychology are relevant to this thesis because emphasizing that the victim is not passive and highlighting their active resistance to violence reveals the humanity and, most importantly, the agency of victims (Wade, 1997; Sapio & Zamperini, 2007).

Sapio & Zamperini (2007) defines peace psychology as focused on nonviolent transformation of conflict and including new approaches to psychosocial issues based on facilitating and sharing experiences rather than on individual psychotherapy. They claim it offers a "critical contribution to post-constructivism, aiming to enrich the practical work of collective psychology" (Sapio & Zamperini, 2007: 266). This new and emerging field could be described as embracing the more radical, transformative, and emancipatory dimensions of peacebuilding (Ramsbotham et al. 2011: 226).

Sapio and Zamperini (2007: 265) describe the emergence of peace psychology as a cross-disciplinary response to the social injustice experienced in the 1970s in Latin America where liberation psychology was birthed. Peace psychology, an extension of liberation psychology, was born as an 'alternative psychology' which developed non-conventional terminology: "Linguistic expressions such as 'application' and 'intervention,' conveying as they do the implicit representation of psychological work as performed 'on' someone, are henceforth abandoned for the very good reason that the basis of the operation is to work 'with' someone: the interlocutors are not 'objects of care' but rather 'participant citizens'" (Sapio and Zamperini, 2007:267).

Such an evolution in the field of psychology transforms our view of victims of violence from one of passive ‘object’ to be acted on, to one of appreciation for their agency and resistance. The importance of recognizing that victims do actively resist violence cannot be overstated and this resistance can be characterized by:

> “any mental or behavioural act through which a person attempts to expose, withstand, repel, stop, prevent, abstain from, strive against, impede, refuse to comply with, or oppose any form of violence or oppression (including any form of disrespect) or the conditions that make such acts possible, may be understood as forms of resistance” (Wade, 1997: 25).

Often when violence is reported, authorities fail to include such acts of resistance in their reports (Coates & Wade, 2003). These missing descriptions result in a disservice to the victim by minimizing the nature of the violence. In other words, to conceal resistance is to conceal violence (ibid). The victim is often seen as passive and lacking in self-agency, which is never the case (Kelly, 1988; Coates & Wade, 2003, 2007). These writers also point out that the act of violence is unilateral (Coates & Wade, 2003). That is, only the perpetrator commits violence. The victim is not responsible for the violent act. However, if the victim's active resistance to the violence is not reported, it becomes easier to blame the victim and minimize the violence. These processes can then serve to absolve the perpetrator from accepting full responsibility for their (unilateral) act of violence.

When the resistance of victims to violence is recognized they are no longer objectified and silenced by terms such as 'casualty' or indeed the word 'victim' but are seen as human beings with agency, who did not want this to happen and did what they could to prevent it. So, while individuals do not

choose to become victims, often both structural and cultural forces collude to conceal the violence that has been perpetrated. These forces are thus culpable for compounding the violence and, again, rendering the victim voiceless.

Research in the area of treatment and violence prevention programs for perpetrators of interpersonal violence offenders confirms that many perpetrators of violence have been victims of violence earlier in their lives (Minerson et al. 2011; Fallot & Bebout, 2012; Peacock & Barker, 2014). These programs are learning that when individuals are given an opportunity to give ‘voice’ to the violence they had experienced earlier in their lives, it is often helpful in their accepting responsibility for the violence they have perpetrated (ibid). These programs imply that trauma-informed approaches in treatment programs for perpetrators of violence may increase their efficacy.

Trauma-Informed Approaches for Perpetrators of Violence

While all boys are exposed to a barrage of social media and other cultural messaging that reinforces negative male stereotypes, those boys and men who commit violent acts frequently have been a victim of some form of violence. Research linking men's prior exposure to violence and traumatic events with subsequent perpetration of violence is growing (Minerson et al. 2011; Fallot & Bebout, 2012; Peacock & Barker, 2014). However, it is important to note that not every boy or man who experiences violence becomes violent.

Minerson et al. (2011) suggest that in working with men who are perpetrators of violence, one of the most powerful ways to gain

understanding and empathy is to ask men about their own experiences of violence and how these experiences impacted them. Such an approach can help remove defensiveness and help men feel that their experiences are also valued as they work towards the primary goal of ending their violent behavior against women (Minerson et al. 2011). This approach deviates from the 'grand narrative' discussed above by opening a window to explore when and how these men are vulnerable (Augusta-Scott, 2007; Minerson et al. 2011).

There are several current examples of this approach. *The Men's Project* (2013) is a non-profit charitable men's counselling agency located in Ottawa that has been providing services to men and their families since 1997. According to this project, one in six boys and men have been sexually abused or assaulted in Canada. An appreciation that many men who perpetrate violence have experienced prior trauma has led to the development of *Nova Scotia's Trauma Informed Network* in 2013. Furthermore, Fallot & Harris (2002) developed the *Men's Trauma Recovery and Empowerment Model* (M-TREM) and modified this model for work with military veterans. These three examples demonstrate a recognition and response to the pervasive experience of trauma by men. Fallot & Harris (2002) describe a central insight from their work with men as recognition of the ways in which cultural messaging and 'warrior ideals' amplify the male stereotypes and masculine gender-role ideals. They suggest that the aim of their work with these men, as with men in general, is finding safe ways for soldiers to access and express otherwise unacceptable thoughts, feelings and behavior patterns and reframe them as normal responses to trauma, a reframing that is fundamentally countercultural (ibid). While a trauma-

informed approach has been validated by local practitioners, researchers in the anti-violence field caution that this understanding should never be seen to excuse violent behavior or prevent perpetrators from assuming full responsibility for violence (Coates &Wade 2003; Augusta-Scott, 2007).

A trauma-informed approach has been applied to violence prevention efforts when working with boys and men. One example, presented in the report titled "*What about the Boys? Raising Men to End Violence Against Women*", provides global evidence indicating that in most cases men are perpetuating violent behaviors they learned as children, often by experiencing violence in families and schools and also by witnessing violence against their own mother (Ichaporia & Lawes, 2013). Their report, which focuses on how to scale efforts in India to teach boys non-violent behavior, highlights the following three actors central to learning these skills: parents, teachers and media professionals (Ichaporia & Lawes 2013).

These researchers describe work with parents as paramount in teaching non-violence because parents are the key influence on children's attitudes and behavior. They noted that schools, where children learn, develop and spend much of their time, were also crucial sites to teach non-violence, making teachers second to parents as key agents of intervention. Ichaporia and Lawes (2013) recommended that gender transformative processes be made part of the main school curriculum. Finally, Ichaporia & Lawes believe that the media could support or contradict families and schools in shaping attitudes and behaviors among children. They recommend that organizations working in this field collaborate with media

professionals to help create an environment conducive to raising non-violent boys (ibid).

Restorative Approaches

Restorative justice, restorative approaches, restorative practices and restorative theory have been collectively defined as a social healing paradigm, not merely a program (McCold, 2006). It is often acknowledged that restorative justice, which originated within First Nations and indigenous communities, is the oldest form of justice (Graham, 2008). Outside indigenous cultures, however, restorative justice is still regarded as a new practice that entails a radical departure from more traditional, Western forms of justice. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2006) defines restorative processes as any process in which the victim, the offender, and (where appropriate) other individuals or community members affected by a crime, actively participate together in the resolution of matters arising from the crime. This process is guided by distinct frameworks and formats for asking questions (Zehr, 2002). A core value of restorative justice is its recognition of crime and conflict as harm to people in interpersonal relationships, rather than harm to the state (Graham, 2008). According to McCold et al. (2007), restorative justice reflects four principles: it is harm-focused, relational, participatory and democratic. As such restorative justice can be understood as a relational peacebuilding approach (Llewellyn & Philpott, 2014).

Such a view radically departs from European and Western notions of justice that often rely on retributive justice theories, which emphasize appropriate punishment of the offender but rarely provide ‘voice’ for the victim (Rawls, 1971). The effectiveness of the mainstream criminal justice system is measured by how many people are caught and sentenced.

According to Graham (2008), this approach evaluates the wrong issue and does not make communities safer. As noted in the previous chapter and earlier sections of this chapter, most incidents of interpersonal violence are not reported to the police and are not addressed within the criminal justice system. When incidents of interpersonal violence are handled within the criminal justice system many women indicate that the process is not satisfactory (Singer, 2013). The victims' voices are often lost in this process (Coates & Wade, 2003; Clute, 2010; Singer, 2013). Many researchers from many countries have critiqued the current retributive justice system as short sighted, punitive and inadequate and have pointed to restorative justice as offering a different paradigm (Gabbay 2005; Clute, 2010; Llewellyn, 2010, 2011; DeFreitas, 2013).

While Nova Scotia is recognized internationally for its leadership in implementing restorative justice practices among youth, there has been a moratorium on the use of restorative approaches in domestic violence cases in the Nova Scotia justice system for about two decades. Women activists and researchers involved in the anti-violence movement have shared their concern that women's safety needs to be the top priority in all responses to interpersonal violence. Implementing restorative approaches in a generic manner may fail to guarantee women's safety (Rubin 2003; Stubbs, 2007). While Stubbs (2007) acknowledges there are potential benefits of restorative justice approaches, she cautions that they have rarely been explored in asymmetrical forms of social relations, that is, where one party, usually the female victim of violence is perceived to have less power than the male perpetrator. A feminist perspective regards questions of victims' interests and

safety, as well as expectations about the victim's role, as central. Stubbs (2007) indicates that this may require an approach that differs from common restorative justice practices. Coker (2006) argues that restorative approaches may be beneficial to women who have experienced domestic violence if the following conditions are met: restorative justice (1) prioritizes victim's safety over perpetrator rehabilitation; (2) offers material as well as social supports for victims; (3) works as part of a coordinated community response; (4) engages normative judgments that oppose gendered domination as well as violence; and (5) does not make forgiveness a goal of the process. She indicates that restorative approaches should not replace the criminal justice system response "but in a menu of options, they offer a beneficial choice for some" (Coker, 2006:80).

The extent and nature of gendered violence in Nova Scotia is under-acknowledged and minimized. According to Randall (2013), given pervasive victim blaming, as well as systemic and individual failures of accountability, caution and skepticism about the capacity of restorative justice approaches are understandable and even warranted. However, she believes that this alone is not sufficient reason to refuse to engage in conceiving, developing and implementing restorative, reparative and more expansive remedies and solutions to the harms of gendered violence – harms which are experienced both individually by victims and more broadly by society at large. Randall (2013) and a growing number of researchers are cautiously suggesting that in some cases restorative approaches could offer an alternative to what some researchers refer to as the primitive response of the criminal justice system (Clute, 2010). Outright rejection of restorative justice and an

insistence on its inapplicability to any and all crimes of gendered violence fails to take seriously feminist critique of the profound limits of the criminal justice system (Randall, 2013).

Cosmopolitan Conflict Resolution and Conflict Transformation

The fifth generation of researchers engaged in building the field of conflict resolution have been called 'cosmopolitans', a term which is based on the Chinese idea of cosmopolitanism defined as " tian xia, based on ren, or 'human-heartedness', combined with li (right living)" (Chun, 2009 qtd in Ramsbotham et al. 2011:426). The focus on cosmopolitanism highlights an awareness of our shared humanity that "underpins the global enterprise of cosmopolitan conflict resolution" (Ramsbotham et al. 2011:426). Another way of looking at this definition of cosmopolitanism is to see in it our own unique responsibility to 'live rightly'. Such an interpretation echoes the inimitable challenge in Ghandhi's famous words; "We must be the change we wish to see". So, while conflict resolution must remain international, this cosmopolitan definition also challenges those engaged in conflict resolution to become personal in the sense of examining how peaceful we are in our interpersonal relationships. As implied by relational theory discussed earlier in this chapter, a return to the radical roots of the conflict resolution field places emphasis on the quality of relationships and interpersonal communication, which has always been at the heart of resolving conflict. Ramsbotham et al. (2011:31) note that in their view, conflict transformation represents conflict resolution at its deepest level because it implies a transformation in the institutions and discourses that reproduce violence, as well as in the conflicting parties themselves and in their relationships. They

point out that conflict transformation corresponds to the underlying tasks of structural and cultural peacebuilding and where this manifests across global spheres, linking the personal, societal, global and ecological spheres, it is called cosmopolitan conflict resolution (ibid: 32).

Lederach (2003) defines conflict transformation as a process that involves envisioning and responding “to the ebb and flow of social conflict as life-giving opportunities for creating constructive change processes that reduce violence, increase justice in direct interaction and social structures, and respond to real-life problems in human relationships”. Such an approach suggests a visioning process that encourages the citizens of Lunenburg County to imagine their communities without interpersonal violence.

The attempt to engage the communities in Lunenburg County (including concerned local citizens, professional agencies and government representatives) in a collaborative effort to address interpersonal violence is a peacebuilding initiative that by definition links the personal with the societal and global spheres. This is particularly obvious in the need to address the explosive, global growth of technology that is ubiquitous for youth. While global, this technology has a particular impact on vulnerable and more rural youth in Lunenburg County who may be even more susceptible to the negative influences of social media and advertising due to their relative isolation. Thus, the influence of culture becomes more apparent and prioritizes the need to examine the messages youth are exposed to that may normalize violence. The influence of culture then, extends far beyond county and provincial borders, and is indeed global.

Community Responses to Violence

Exploring the structural and cultural influences on violence results in a focus on broad structures and points to the need for systemic change facilitated by community engagement. As noted above, current literature on reducing interpersonal violence indicates promising new approaches as well as the need for more sustained, coordinated and focused community peacebuilding efforts. Recently, "many CCRs have moved away from a coordinated agency response to a coordinated community response that includes agencies and organizations that traditionally have not been associated with addressing IPV [interpersonal violence] (e.g., schools, faith communities, and businesses); some have added primary prevention efforts (e.g., *Domestic Violence Prevention Enhancements and Leadership Through Alliances*" (Klevens & Cox, 2009). The '*Be the Peace'* project expanded on these models to include the community as a central stakeholder in their efforts to coordinate a community response to interpersonal violence in Lunenburg County. Their use of creative and innovative community engagement techniques aimed to harness local wisdom and direction related to what measures community members felt was necessary to end interpersonal violence. In doing so the subsequent aims and directions of this project differed from earlier models, such as the Duluth model by allowing for greater complexity in understanding both the origins of violence and the range of effective responses needed within the community to end interpersonal violence. This type of direction allows for movement towards further integration of the approaches noted above that focus on the

construction of social environments that promote equity, social justice and non-violence.

According to Kelly and Lovett (2005) an integrated approach, which is the aim of community coordinated responses to all forms of interpersonal violence, should promote gender equity and social justice and deliver human rights. This approach is in line with recommendations of a United Nations report focused on measures necessary to end widespread violence again women, recommendations that explicitly state that prevention is a key element of coordinated community responses to violence (United Nations Population Fund, 2005).

Again, the need for further surveillance, data collection, research and evaluation is noted in much of the literature about effective community planning to reduce interpersonal violence (World Health Organization, 2010; Wells et al., 2012). In their analysis of domestic violence plans from around the world, Wells et al. (2012) acknowledge that evidence on the effectiveness of prevention strategies which are a part of coordinated community responses is limited. However, they note that successful prevention strategies include the following elements:

1. Raising public awareness
2. Changing societal attitudes and norms
3. School-based education
4. Improving policy and legislation
5. Enhancing collaboration and co-operation among systems
6. Gathering standardized and comparable data

7. Community responses that are successful in reducing interpersonal violence.

These researchers also found that limiting access to alcohol, ensuring healthy relationship curriculum programming in schools, utilization of whole school approaches, and effective media campaigns are all strategies that have been demonstrated to be effective in the prevention of domestic violence.

Klevens and Cox (2009) summarize the best available evidence in primary prevention of interpersonal violence to make further recommendations to address the needs of victims and offender accountability. These recommendations include:

1. Parent training focused on skill development, effective disciplinary practices, increasing positive parent-child interactions, and emotional communication (Kaminski et al., 2008)
2. Family-based interventions that target children with antisocial behavior.
3. Structured curricula combined with community-wide activities for teens.

The World Health Organization (2010) points out that intimate partner and sexual violence are not inevitable; levels vary over time and between places due to a variety of social, cultural, economic, and other factors. However, the analysis of strategies to reduce these forms of violence is, as noted previously, at an early stage. According to the World Health Organization (2010), the three main approaches for changing social and cultural norms that support intimate partner and sexual violence are: social norms theory (i.e. correcting misperceptions that the use of such violence is a highly prevalent normative behaviour among peers) which is linked to

previous literature that explored the deconstruction of gendered and violent norms; media awareness campaigns; and working with men and boys which has been discussed above (WHO, 2010:54).

According to Singer (2012) coordinated community responses face many challenges that can include:

> "power imbalances among the participating agencies, agencies protecting their turf, differences in working styles and practice, lack of resources, inconsistent attendance, disregard for victim-survivor's consent, controversies on whether there should be a lead agency, and differences regarding gender, race and equality issues can all become problems".

In Nova Scotia, as in many places in the world, provincial and municipal agendas can change with new governments, and this can add an additional level of frustration for those attempting to initiate sustained and lengthy programs to prevent interpersonal violence. This is highlighted by efforts taken by the Nova Scotia government long-time employees to launch social media campaigns to reduce interpersonal violence that can be stymied when a different government is elected who may have different goals (Action Team on Sexual Violence and Bullying, 2013).

In coordinated community responses the need to focus on limiting access to alcohol in violence prevention strategies is highlighted by an example from the province of Alberta, Canada. When liquor stores were privatized in Alberta in 1993, access to alcohol was increased and rates of violence involving alcohol rose dramatically, rising from 40% to 60% of all crimes in the year after privatization (Wells et al. 2013). Limiting access to alcohol as a strategy to reduce interpersonal violence has been supported by many alcohol research and policy experts (Babor et al. 2010; Parker&

McCaffree, 2013). Over the past two decades, a growing amount of research has demonstrated the effectiveness of alcohol policy interventions in reducing harms from alcohol, including all forms of interpersonal violence (World Health Organization, 2005, 2011; Babor et al. 2010; Parker & McCaffree, 2013; Wells et al. 2013). These policy measures largely rest on an essential aspect of a coordinated community response that a community can influence the environment and alter factors that either encourage or discourage harm. Parker & McCaffree (2013:4) explain that environmental prevention entails changing the nature of interactions through changes to the environment rather than changes people's attitudes, opinions and desires. Parker & McCaffree cite the American Medical Association website as an example of environmental prevention applied to alcohol policy:
"Environmental prevention uses policy interventions to create an alcohol environment that supports healthy, safe behavior" (Ibid: 5). These authors argue, "city officials and political leaders can employ alcohol policy in an environmental prevention mode to help reduce and prevent much of the alcohol-related violence" (Parker & McCaffree, 2013: 5).

Conclusion

This thesis proposes that violence is socially constructed. It asserts that violence occurs in contexts of social injustice, alienation, damaged relationships, disintegration of community, and stigma. Such an understanding moves our focus from individual problematic behavior to the social factors that contribute to violence. Ending interpersonal violence requires a return to the radical roots of conflict resolution and peacebuilding which, based on relational approaches, aim to create environments in which all people could flourish (Boulding, 1977; Curle, 1995; Mitchels, 2006; Galtung & Webel, 2007; Lederach & Lederach, 2010).

The literature reviewed in this chapter points to a coordinated community response as essential to ending interpersonal violence in Lunenburg County, Nova Scotia, Canada and to elements that suggest ways of continuing to build on such responses. These efforts will engage community citizens as well as agencies and government representatives in both a response and prevention efforts. Positioning the issues of reducing relationship violence within a grassroots, community peacebuilding framework will entail the following elements in my research:

1. Locating interpersonal violence as a social problem that is influenced by social, cultural, economic and political forces.
2. Incorporating a framework to address cultural and structural influences on direct forms of violence.
3. A recognition that while the perpetration of violence is unilateral, healing from violence or the restoration of relationships must involve mutuality or a 'relationality' in which all voices are heard.

Researchers such as Curle, 1971, 1995; Galtung, 1996; Boulding, 1977; Lederach, 2003; Mitchels, 2006; Schirch, 2008; Lederach & Lederach, 2010 and Ramsbotham et al. 2011 have written about the transformational aspects of peacbuilding that lend themselves to social healing.

The literature reviewed in this chapter aimed to profile research that explains the development of substance abuse and/or addiction as related to experiences of dislocation, separation and alienation as conveyed by the dislocation theory of addiction (Alexander, 2008; Mate, 2008). This theory decenters a focus on individual pathology, genetic causes or moral failings as explanations for the development of substance abuse and/or addiction to a focus on the ways in which community's nurture connection, resilience and a sense of belonging for individuals. This theory purports that substance abuse and/or addiction is a social problem that is linked to economic, political and cultural factors.

The literature reviewed in relation to violence was framed within a community peacebuilding framework that also positions cultural and structural factors that create alienation and disconnection as central to understanding the origins of violence (Curle, 1971,1995 & 1996; Alexander, 2008; Mate, 2008). While individual perpetrator accountability is emphasized, violence, like substance abuse and/or addiction, is recognized as a social problem.

The literature reviewed in this chapter also highlighted the links between substance abuse and/or addiction and violence and the specific ways both are connected to cultural and structural factors (World Health

Organization, 2005, 2011; Babor et al. 2010; Parker & McCaffree, 2013; Wells et al. 2013).

This thesis hypothesizes that a community peacebuilding framework can expand upon strategies to end interpersonal violence in Lunenburg County, Nova Scotia by exploring the transformative potential of grassroots, community peacebuilding.

Chapter Four: Methods and Methodology

Introduction

This chapter will discuss ontological, epistemological and theoretical foundations of this thesis and then review the research design, the ways in which interviewees were recruited, and the details of the sample, and how ethical concerns were addressed. This qualitative research utilized both individual and group (focus) interviews as a means of collecting data to contribute to a broader discussion of what is necessary in community responses to men's violence against women. Both the focus groups and individual interviews were guided by the same semi-structured interview schedule. Throughout this thesis I have asserted my ongoing commitment to social justice and the belief that research endeavors should have an emancipatory and transformative function. I address the 'I' in this research process and assert that social research is a 'messy' enterprise that attempts to explore complex topics (Law 2004). Like Wallace (2009:89), as noted previously, I recognize the inclusion of my own identity, experiences and knowledges as intrinsic to authenticating what I claim and how I write, "in keeping with the triple crisis (representation, legitimacy and praxis) faced by researchers".

This research aimed to create spaces for multiple voices often excluded from current conflict transformation and peacebuilding. It asserts that men's violence against women, and all forms of interpersonal violence impacts the community life of both men and women and as such, demands a community response. It is grounded in the belief that community citizens who are engaged in this issue must define this community response.

Therefore, this research explored what measures engaged community citizens believe are necessary to end all forms of interpersonal violence. The literature indicates that little is known about effective primary prevention strategies (Well, et al. 2012). This is the result of a lack of focus on the prevention of interpersonal violence, including both sexual violence and domestic violence, incomplete information on risk factors and the lack of adequately evaluated programs and interventions (Moloughney, 2007; Flaherty, 2010). This research addresses this gap and explores what community citizens from diverse backgrounds define as important measures to end violence. This form of engagement required that the sample include community members who are professionals in an area related to this issue, such as police or social workers, as well as community members who do not have a professional interest in this issue.

Throughout the different chapters this thesis asserts that the field of peace studies and conflict resolution has lacked a sustained and comprehensive gendered focus that has limited its capacity to highlight and connect the need for deep structural and cultural changes necessary to make the world a safer place for girls and women and boys and men (Ramsbotham, et al. 2011; Woroniuk, 2001; Woodhouse & Santiago, 2012; Duvvury, 2009; Beever, 2010). When men's violence against women is positioned within a grassroots community peacebuilding framework it is necessary to recognize that communities are not peaceful when girls and women experience violence in their communities. This approach highlights that interpersonal violence and particularly violence against girls and women,

frequently impacts others who may include children, extended family members and community members. This violence has a ripple effect.

This research rests on the assumption that efforts to reduce men's violence against women are ultimately about the creation of a positive peace and 'right relationships' that can be described as peacebuilding (Llewellyn & Philipott, 2014: 17). The concept of 'right relations' is related to relational approaches to justice that focus on "the harm and effects of wrongs on relationships at all levels: individual, group, community, national, and international" (Llewellyn & Philipott, 2014: 16). These approaches involve dialogue that is non-adversarial and future oriented. As noted in Chapter Three, Lederach (2003) defines conflict transformation as a process that involves envisioning and responding "to the ebb and flow of social conflict as life-giving opportunities for creating constructive change processes that reduce violence, increase justice in direct interaction and social structures, and respond to real-life problems in human relationships". In this way, this research purports to make contributions to the field of peace studies by offering a critique that explores what citizens of Lunenburg County say about the cultural and structural influence on violence that may point to opportunities for constructive change to reduce and end violence against women.

Peacebuilding Theoretical Influences

The interview questions were formatted based on Galtung's conception of direct violence which implies a critical analysis of structural and cultural influences.

Patomaki (2001) argues there is a clear place for critical peace research suggesting that Galtung's new idea of emancipatory peace research brings it into the realm of critical theory. She writes:

> "Political violence, the threat of violence and the preparation for violence define the subject of peace research. The subject can be expanded by extending the term violence in a metaphorical sense, for example to include 'structural violence', 'psychological violence' or 'interpretative violence against otherness'" (Patomaki 2001:731).

Her statement supports the aims of this research project that acknowledges that while the terminology has shifted from 'conflict transformation' to 'peacebuilding', the meaning of peacebuilding remains "a long-term multi-track transformative contribution to social change, helping to create a just and sustainable peace beyond the narrow definition of a post-conflict period" (Paffenholz, 2014:13). As Paffenholz (2014) acknowledges, while Galtung (1975) is credited with crafting the original concepts of peacebuilding in 1975, the field of peacebuilding research and policy practices began to shift in focus from the international to the local during the 1990s. This shift towards the 'local' she credits as largely led by Lederach with the focus placed on local actors "in the driving seat" to determine local initiatives (Paffenholz, 2014: 11). This research project is built on the assumptions that local citizens must determine local solutions to violence against women and that such work is rightly labeled peacebuilding.

Feminism: The Personal is Political

Feminist research is not confined to women but is guided by a sex- and gender-based analysis of all aspects of social reality including boys and men. Feminist research also recognizes differences within 'gender' and 'sex' that

include lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer people as also demonstrated by the United Nations (2011) terms 'Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity' (SOGI) (Sauer & Podhora, 2013). This research project acknowledges:

> "gender filters knowledge; that is, the sex of the interviewer and the sex of the respondent make a difference because the interview takes place within the cultural boundaries of a paternalistic social system in which masculine identities are differentiated from feminine ones" (Fontana & Frey, 2005: 710).

However, this research project also acknowledges that there are other elements that 'filter knowledge', including, age, race, class, dis(Ability), social status and social location, that may be recognized within a social determinants of health lens (Crenshaw, 1991; Duvvury, 2009).

Feminist research offers a persistent critique regarding the role of objectivity, of positivism and the scientific method by emphasizing the need to consider the role of power and the role of the researcher. According to Stanley & Wise (1993:59) 'objectivity' is a term men have given to their own subjectivity. According to Rich:

> "Masculine ideologies are the creation of masculine subjectivity; they are neither objective, nor value-free nor inclusively 'human'. Feminism implies that we recognize fully the inadequacy for us, the distortion, of male-centered ideologies, and that we proceed to think and act, out of that recognition" (Rich, 1979: 207).

Likewise, it can be argued that feminist constructs are the creation of feminist subjectivity, which recognizes the problems concerning the power relationship involved in the research process and that all human attributes are brought into the research situation (ibid). Stanley & Wise (1993: 60)

suggest that the researcher should be the central focus of the research and argue that it is impossible “to experience and not to experience, to do research and not to do research through the medium of one’s own consciousness”. According to these researchers, this should be made a central part of the research report and in assent to their claims I acknowledge that my experiences are an integral part of the research and should be described.

My positionality entails one of privilege as a white, middle-aged, middle class, cisgendered woman and one who has encountered oppression in the form of sexism. In my youth, I volunteered for two years work in Papua New Guinea and saw first-hand the violence that many women experienced in that country in the form of exploitive labor and physical and sexual assault. Even then, it was understood by many, that this violence against women was related to the erosion of traditional ways of life and culture in Papua New Guinea (Romaine, 1992). Two- thirds of women experience gender-based violence that is related to structural and cultural factors linked to a sense of alienation and dislocation (Ganster-Breidler, 2010; Chandler, 2014).

During my twenty-year employment history as a clinical therapist in a variety of addiction and mental health settings in Nova Scotia, I participated in hundreds of conversations with individuals who mostly identified as women who had experienced interpersonal violence, most of which was perpetrated by those who were identified as male. Situating men’s violence against women within a peacebuilding framework gives this violence visibility and prominence. This violence can then be seen more clearly as a human rights violation and not a private matter between two people. In this way ‘the

personal becomes the political', which is also a central dictum of feminist research (Stanley & Wise, 1993; Nielsen & Dewhurst, 2010).

I briefly state these aspects of my personal history because they are pivotal in influencing my thoughts and emotions regarding interpersonal violence and in this way, are also political. My personal history informs my consciousness, which in turn infused the development of the interview questions, the research methodology and analysis, and my beliefs about what constitutes knowledge. This brief section focusing on the 'I' in research is included in this methodology chapter to highlight my belief that my positionality is central to all social science research as Stanley & Wise (1993) point out and as such, is relevant to ethical research.

Critical Realism: Ontological and Epistemological Foundations

Critical realism, a meta-theory, informs the ontological and epistemological foundations of this research. The merits of critical realism have been characterized as bridging the divide between the relativism that is often noted to describe post-modernism and the narrow focus of sociological modernism that is associated with an "overweening confidence in the ability of social scientists (or in modernism's less academic guise, the ability of 'experts'), now or later, to know all there is to know, without doubt and without blinkers" (Stones, 1996: 2; see also Houston, 2001). Such confidence obscures the complexity of "a real, non-constructed, property of the world" (Gerrits & Verweij, 2013: 168). In other words, the ontology of critical realism perceives the existence of a world independent from our thoughts and what we believe to know about it while acknowledging that our knowledge is only partial and evolving. For example, in his book titled *Sociological Reasoning,*

Towards a Past-Modern Sociology, Rob Stones (1994:4) “advocates for a sophisticated form of realism which rejects the defeatism of postmodernism and also moves beyond modernism’s complacency”.

Roy Bhaskar, a central figure in the development of critical realism, outlines an ontology that suggests the existence of “a real richly differentiated and depth-stratified world, independent of human epistemology and methodology, in which the domains of the real, actual, and empirical are categorically distinct” (as cited in Hedlund-de Witt, 2012: 4). Society is then described as a “complex and causally efficacious whole—a totality whose concept must be constructed in theory, and which is being continually transformed in practice” (Bhaskar, 1978: 24). Bhaskar’s work posits that causality is real and can be researched while at the same time acknowledges that any analysis is partial and incomplete:

> The term “causality” does not imply universal laws or necessity. Rather, it concerns specific configurations that are temporal in time and local in place which activate certain mechanisms that bring about specific reality. Research can aid in describing and understanding how these configurations operate. However, critical realists understand that “social reality is too complex to be fully understood….” (as cited in Gerrits & Verweij, 2013: 178).

Such an approach is well suited to the study of what is necessary to inform a community response to men’s violence against women because it can encompass complexity and appreciates that social research, while maintaining an emancipatory thrust, yields only a partial understanding of reality (Houston, 2001).

Houston (2001) describes critical realism as facilitating greater ‘depth’ in social research that can address the perceived gaps between theory and

research practice alluded to by Aymer and Okitikpi (2000) and Archer (1995). This perceived gap between research and theory is often the result of a general lack of reflection (Archer, 1995; Aymer & Okitikpi, 2000). Indeed, Okasha (2002:11) suggests that all the social sciences are perceived as lagging “behind the natural sciences in terms of sophistication and rigor”, perhaps because they have a much shorter history. Fay (1996: 3) wonders if the exploration of social science questions is, or can be, scientific? He queries if it is ever possible to fully understand others and if so, by what measures (Fay, 1996: 5). Such interrogations of the social sciences, coupled with the alleged gap between theory and research practice, renders the examination of epistemological claims to truth, that is how we come to know what we know all the more vital.

Historically, a study of philosophy has always entailed a reading of both empiricists and rationalist writers. According to Greetham (2006: 61) rationalists rely on reason to reveal and justify truth, while empiricists believe our knowledge of truth depends on the evidence of our senses. As philosophy evolved, theorists believed that knowledge was acquired by following either empirical or rational lines of inquiry. This divide influenced subsequent epistemological development.

According to Crotty (1998) there is a range of epistemologies. He refers to three: objectivism, constructionism and subjectivism (Crotty, 1998: 5). He describes objectivism as a belief that meaning and meaningful reality exist independent of our awareness of it. For example, he explains that a tree in a forest remains a tree whether it is seen or not. It has an intrinsic ‘tree-ness’, exists independently and therefore has an objective reality. He states that

“much of the early ethnography was certainly carried out in that spirit” which would mean for an objectivist, truth is something that will be discovered if research is conducted in the proper manner (Crotty, 1998: 4).

Constructionists do not believe this. Within the constructionist epistemology truth is not discovered but rather constructed by an interaction between subject and ‘object’. This view of knowledge opens the door for many new possibilities as it acknowledges that different people may construct meaning differently, even about the same phenomenon. For example, if this view of knowledge is applied to the field of mental health one could say that what may appear to be a ‘psychiatric disorder’ to an objectivist could be viewed by a constructionist as an ‘adaptive response’. Crotty (1998) also points out that constructionism is the epistemology that is most embraced by qualitative research.

Subjectivism is more difficult to understand because it is sometimes linked with constructionism. However, what distinguishes subjectivism is the lack of reciprocal interaction between subject and object. Meaning “is imposed on the object by the subject” (Crotty, 1998: 5).

Houston (2001) claims that the utilization of constructionism as a framework underpinning research practice to promote social change has been strongly critiqued in recent decades. A critique of social constructionism helps illuminate the strengths of the critical realist perspective and points to areas where research having an emancipatory focus can be enhanced.

To begin with, the concept of ‘discourse’ as part of social constructionist theory is problematic if it is not placed within a wider conceptual framework that acknowledges the impact of broad political and economic agendas. This

concept was developed largely by Foucault and was meant to offer “an alternative conception of the social world which was shaped by language, discourse and power” (Houston, 2001: 847). In his work describing the disciplinary effects of prison life on inmates Foucault famously employs the image of a panopticon to demonstrate the ways in which power can be exercised to establish norms of behavior in society (Foucault, 1975). By this, he depicts:

> “the practice of placing individuals under ‘observation’ [as] a natural extension of a justice imbued with disciplinary methods and examination procedures….that resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals….”(Foucault, 1975:228).

Foucault describes ‘technologies of power’ that serve to monitor individual’s behavior by surveillance as is evidenced by the panopticon metaphor (Foucault, 1975: 194). Foucault stated in a written reply at the end of an interview, that by truth he did not mean “the ensemble of truths which are to be discovered and accepted’ but rather ‘the ensemble of rules according to which the true and the false are separated and specific effects of power attached to the true” (as cited in Gordon, 1980: 132). Foucault also cautioned against a language that characterized power in negative terms: “in fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth” (Foucault, 1975: 194). Foucault’s theories regarding the production of knowledge and power provided a critique of modernism and contributed to postmodern thought.

However, according to Grande (2003: 333) the discursive tactics of postmodern and poststructuralist theories following Foucault’s portrayal of

power are limited by failing to recognize that power is historically and materially determined. "Thus, just as the discursive tactics of postmodernism privilege the indeterminacy of the subject, they also construe power as indeterminate and diffuse" (Grande, 2003: 332). Grande (2003) suggests that the concept of discourse can reduce politics to a language effect that is directed merely at change in cultural representations and thereby reduces the emancipatory project; efforts to end social injustice. The critical realist believes it is not only important to understand the ways in which the world is influenced, but also believe it is important to change the world (Gergen, 2009). As such, Foucault's theoretical writing about the determinative effects of power in shaping dominant discourses is helpful but according to critical realism not the full story (Sayer, 2012).

Archer (2000: 30) argues that Foucault's theory can also be critiqued as creating an ontological denial of the relationship between discourse and reality. As noted above, the ontology of critical realism perceives the existence of a world independent from our thoughts and acknowledges our knowledge of it is partial and evolving (Stones, 1994; Archer, 2000; Gerrits & Verweij, 2013).

More generally, social constructionism is critiqued for its' anti-realist stand as it embraces "a nominalist line of thought, according to which reality is amorphous, without qualities, and is only provided with arbitrary patterns by the researcher" (Gergen, 2009: 37). For example, constructionism may not take into satisfactory account the ways in which globalized capitalism historically and materially informs structural foundations that determine social and cultural factors that relate to experiences of direct violence such as those

entailed in colonial practices (Grande, 2003). Sayer (2000: 156) explains that the meaning of the word critical in the term critical realism implies a connection with the goals of critical social science, “that is, a social science that is critical of the practices which are its objects of study”. Therefore, when social science identifies misconceptions and avoidable suffering in the interactions it studies the ensuing explanations imply social action to alleviate suffering (Parkin, 2014). As noted by Sayer (2000: 156) the implied emancipatory potential remains controversial “because of its implication that we can deduce ought from is”. Sayer (2000: 156) argues that this kind of explanatory critique requires the defense of normative or critical standpoints. “A normative theory which was more attuned to the patterning of social life, with its concrete geographies and histories could usefully inform political practice, and counter the loss of direction associated with the decline of the Left” (Sayer, 2000: 187). These connections link to the meta-analysis that frames this thesis that asserts grassroots community peacebuilding will involve defining and connecting measures at the local level that can lead to defining and challenging broad, oppressive cultural and structural factors linked to the persistence of violence at provincial, national, and international levels. The strength of critical realism is that it “permits a new integration of what are usually referred to as subjectivist and objectivist approaches in social theory” (Robson, 2002: 35). I argue that critical realism provides a lens to examine a social reality that is socially constructed and constituted by constructions influenced by a material and historical reality of globalized capitalism that continues to evolve.

Critical realism, as noted above, is a meta-theory that suggests a philosophical approach that bridges divides to describe a crossing point between the natural and social worlds (Stones, 1994). As long as people are critical of injustice that may include for example, oppression, violence and environmental devastation, Bhaskar (1998: 197) concludes “there will always be a need for new, ever-deepening and more practically efficacious critical philosophy of and for the human sciences”.

The strengths of critical realism originate from its ability to bridge the gap between subjectivist, constructionist and objectivist positions. “The new integration argues that social structure is at the same time the relatively enduring product, and also the medium, of motivated human action” (Robson, 2002: 35). It acknowledges that positivism has been discredited but avoids “the divorce from science implied by a thoroughgoing relativist approach” (Robson, 2002: 42). I argue that critical realism opens doors to explore the influences of economics, politics, culture as well as individual beliefs and human agency and is most appropriate to this research that explores emancipatory community responses to interpersonal violence within a grassroots community peacebuilding framework.

Influential Concepts and Theories in the Research Design

To guide data analysis, I chose to incorporate co-cultural communication theories within a broader grassroots community peacebuilding framework. To understand the evolution of co-cultural theory it is first necessary to understand both mute group theory and standpoint theory upon which co-cultural theory is based. The following sections will provide a brief overview of muted group theory and standpoint theory before

moving forward to a focus on co-cultural theory (Harding 1991, 2008; Kramarae, 1981; Henley & Kramerae, 1994; Samovar & Porter 1994; Orbe, 1998, 2005; Burnett et al. 2009; Lederach & Lederach, 2010. The data gathered through this thesis was analyzed in relation to the ways in which research participants highlighted the communication patterns of dominant groups that sustain and maintain a culture in which violence against women remains a substantial problem.

A: Muted Group Theory

Throughout the analysis of the 'data' for this thesis it became apparent that many interview participants questioned if speaking about the issue of interpersonal violence would have the potential to influence broader societal structures. Muted group theory offers a helpful explanation of the ways in which some members of society can feel silenced.

According to Orbe (1998b: 4) "muted group theory was initially established by anthropologists Shirley and Edwin Ardener and later adopted by communication and feminist scholars to address the experiences of women and African American men." Orbe (1998a:8) writes that "in every society a social hierarchy exists that privileges some groups over others and that those groups that function at the top of the social hierarchy determine to a great extent the communication system of the entire society." Overtime, he explains, the worldview of the dominant group members is reinforced as the appropriate communicative system for both dominant and non-dominant group members (as cited by Ardener, 1978). In this way dominant political and economic actors have pervasive influence. As described by Orbe (1998b: 2):

“This process renders marginalized groups as largely muted because their lived experiences are not represented in these dominant structures” (Orbe, 1998: 2). I believe that muted group theory has pointed applicability to the experiences of women in general and is particularly applicable to women who have been victimized by men ’s violence. However, as my research indicates, it is also applicable to men who feel silenced by the culture in which they live. Muted group theory has been implemented in previous research. For example, Burnett, et al. (2009) effectively incorporated muted group theory into their analysis of college and university rape in the United States to highlight the silencing of the voices of rape victims.

B: ‘Voicelessness’

A focus on voice and, therefore, on various forms of communication is central to this research which highlights that violence towards women is influenced by cultural norms—specifically gendered stereotypical norms that are promoted and sustained by communication practices.

The above description of muted group theory resonates with the writing of conflict resolution theorists Lederach & Lederach (2010) who describe the metaphor of ‘voicelessness’ as directly related to the experience of victims of violence. They write:

> “Many victims of violence experience a profound sense of powerlessness, an overwhelming and deeply rooted feeling that they do not have a voice in the processes of response and the decisions that affect their lives or in the events happening around them, though officially these processes are portrayed as being conducted on their behalf. Their primary point of reference rises from the feeling of being left out, creating the experience that solidifies a profound sense of distance and exclusion. They are talked about but not talked with and

> when they are talked with, they often express a sense that the talk was not meaningful because it did not lead to expected change, particularly in political processes purported to deliver peace to a conflicted country and to their local communities. Voice as a metaphor has association with terms like inclusion, power and meaningfulness" (ibid, 2010: 65).

These themes of inclusion, power and meaningfulness are explored throughout the analysis of the data.

Both Lederach & Lederach (2010) and Burnett, et al. (2009) discuss the impact of rape on women attending university in the United States as 'silencing the victim'. Interestingly, in their book, Lederach & Lederach (2010) include both the experiences of women who are raped on university campuses in the United States and women who experience sexual assault and other forms of violence in parts of Africa and South America. These writers imply a generalization of the experience of victimization which transcends geographic location and is united by a shared sense of 'voicelessness'.

The concept of 'voicelessness' as described by Lederach and Lederach (2010) implies that there are no words to adequately convey some experiences. Burnett, et al. (2009) attempt to explain this phenomenon by implying because of prescribed communications patterns determined by dominant groups subordinate groups become in effect, inarticulate. Kramarae (1981: 7) explains that ''experiences peculiar to the subordinate group have not yet been encoded in a language''. Kramarae (1981) emphasizes the need to focus on language as being central to muted groups, particularly women, as recognition that women experience the world differently, and in patriarchal societies, the male view is dominant and the

female view is subordinate. Therefore, if they want to participate in discourse, women must adopt the male communicative system (Kramarae, 1981; Henley & Kramerae, 1994; Orbe, 1998b, 2005).

The ways in which victims of violence assimilate their communication to the dominant group is further explained by co-cultural theory, as discussed in subsequent sections of this chapter.

C: Standpoint Theory

According to Sandra Harding (1991, 2008) the intellectual history of feminist standpoint theory can be traced to Hegel's reflection on what can be known about relationships from the standpoint of the slave's life versus that of the master's. Marx, Engles, and Lukacs subsequently developed this insight into the standpoint of the proletariat and from this evolved Marxist theories to explain how class society operates. Harding (1991, 2008) explains that the starting point for standpoint theory, which is often misread—is that societies stratified by race, ethnicity, class, gender and sexuality are shaped by these structures which result in the activities of those at the top both organizing and setting limits on what a person who performs such activities can understand about themselves and the world around them. Standpoint epistemology sets the relation between knowledge and politics at the center of its account to explain the effects that different kinds of politics have on the production of knowledge (ibid).

Standpoint, by exploring the lived experiences of persons who are marginalized, focuses on acknowledging a specific societal positioning that serves as a subjective vantage point from which persons interact with themselves and the world (Orbe, 1998). It emphasizes that it is essential to

recognize the impact of a person's field of experience to understand their perceptions of daily communication experiences. As such, the standpoint of those who have experienced violence, for example, is recognized as contributing to the muting of their voices and counter measures are taken within this research to profile their voice.

D: Co-Cultural Theory

Co-cultural theory "emerged from the oral narratives of traditionally muted groups" (Orbe, 1998: 1). As Orbe (1998) points out, culture and communication are inextricably linked (as cited by Brislin, 1993). Burnett, et al. (2009) describe the progression of co-cultural theory as extending from standpoint and muted group theories to posit that in contexts where their experiences are marginalized, co-cultures participate in and negotiate their status within the dominant discourse by using particular communicative strategies. Co-cultures can be defined as pariah in respect to dominant social groups (Orbe, 1998). In patriarchal societies, women traditionally constitute a co-culture.

According to Samovar & Porter (1994) co-cultures exist all around us but we are often unaware of them because they are rendered invisible by the dominant culture. Orbe's (1998: 7) co-cultural communication theory model draws from muted group, standpoint and phenomenological theoretical concepts and rests upon two specific premises:

1. Co-cultural group members—including women, people of color, gays, lesbians/bisexuals, people with disabilities, and those from a lower socioeconomic status—will share a similar societal positioning

that renders them marginalized and underrepresented within dominant structures;

2. In order to confront oppressive dominant structures and achieve any measure of success, co-cultural group members adopt certain communication orientations when functioning with the confines of public communicative structures.

According to Orbe (1998) co-cultural group members may occupy different standpoints contingent on their unique life experiences. He described three primary interactional outcomes that exist for those persons outside the dominant structures in society: assimilation, accommodation and separation (ibid: 10).

Orbe's (1998) co-cultural theory model details communication orientations that focus on versions of assertive, non-assertive and aggressive communication styles and the following four factors that influence communication: the field of experience, abilities, situational context and perceived costs and rewards. These fours factors, within the co-cultural communication theory, informed the data analysis for this thesis that recognized the importance of one's cumulative lived experience or field of experience in shaping their worldview and communication patterns. It also recognized that the abilities, situational contexts and perceived costs and rewards influence what is given 'voice'. For example, if victims of sexual assault believe they will be held responsible for their experience of victimization they may, in their assessment of their situational context and of the costs associated with this process, decide not to report the assault. This

analysis helps move our gaze from individuals to systemic factors that may encourage or discourage ‘voice’.

Applied Thematic Analysis

The previous sections discussed theoretical underpinnings for this research that informed data analysis by the focus on elevating the ‘voice’ and thereby local wisdom of those interviewed. The discussion and analysis of the data was evidenced by direct quotations from those interviewed and employed a co-cultural theoretical approach within a broader community peace-building framework that is consistent throughout this thesis and incorporates analysis of direct, cultural and structural violence. Chapters Five presents the findings and subsequent three chapters presents data analysis. According to Guest, et al. (2012) thematic analyses, such as grounded theory, requires the involvement and interpretation of the researcher. This kind of analysis moves beyond counting words and phrases to focus on identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas, which are the themes found within the data. Codes can be developed to identify themes and group raw data. According to these authors applied thematic analysis is comprised of “a bit of everything—grounded theory, positivism, interpretivism and phenomenology—synthesized into one methodological framework” (Guest, et al. 2012: 15). However, despite this eclecticism, applied thematic analysis should not lack rigor, and is an inductive set of procedures implemented to identify and examine themes from the transcribed interviews in a manner that is transparent and credible (ibid). They note that while grounded theory is by definition aimed at building theory, applied thematic analysis is not restricted to this purpose and can be

broader and “include social and cultural phenomena as well” (Guest, et al. 2012:18).

Braun & Clarke (2006) argue that thematic analysis is a method in its’ own right and point to commonality with qualitative analysis that focuses on identifying thematic meanings. They celebrate the flexibility of this method and join with Guest et al. (2012) in their validation of its rigor (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Braun & Clarke (2006) make an interesting distinction between the language of themes emerging which can be misinterpreted to mean the themes ‘reside’ in the data and will emerge versus the recognition of the discretion of the researcher. They point out that the themes that emerge are chosen and named by the researcher. In their decision not to subscribe to a naïve realism, they point out that even a ‘giving voice’ approach involves selecting evidence to border our arguments. They sum up their definition of thematic analysis as involving “the searching across a data set—be that a number of interviews or focus groups, or a range of texts—to find repeated patterns of meaning” (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 15).

The Case Study

According to Stake (2005) a case study is a common way to conduct qualitative research (as cited by Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). A case study “gains credibility by thoroughly triangulating the descriptions and interpretations, not just in a single step but continuously throughout the period of the study” (Stake 2005: 444). Chapter Two of this thesis described the case study, Lunenburg County, and Chapter Three presented a review of relevant literature. This qualitative research project utilized both individual

and group (focus) interviews as a means of collecting data that will contribute to a broader discussion of what is necessary in community responses to men's violence against women and all forms of interpersonal violence. This case study that includes a literature review, individual interviews and focus groups will be implemented to triangulate the data collection.

A case study is not a methodology but rather a choice of what is to be studied (Stake 2005). Stake (2005) finds it useful to make distinctions about types of case studies. In this research the term instrumental case study is used to qualify this project because of the intent to "provide insight into an issue or to redraw a generalization" (ibid: 445). While exploring attempts to reduce interpersonal violence in Lunenburg County is the focus of this research, the issue is global.

The Sample: Interview Participants

All interview participants lived in Lunenburg County, Nova Scotia, Canada and had been either engaged with the *Be the Peace, Make A Change* project as demonstrated by their attendance at a community event (or events) hosted by the project or were key stakeholders within the communities of Lunenburg County. In future sections this project will be referred to, as '*Be the Peace*'. Several of the people involved in the *Be the Peace* project participated in specific groups that met on a monthly basis to focus on a particular topic. Members of these groups comprised three different focus groups. Data analysis for this thesis focused on the responses of thirty-four interviewees. Sixteen people participated in three focus groups and eighteen individual interviews were conducted. One focus group, referred to as 'Gather the Men' was comprised of six men who had been meeting monthly for the past eighteen months to discuss issues related to engaging men on the issue of reducing violence against women. A second focus group, referred to as the 'Youth and Schools' focus group was comprised of five women and one man. This group had also been meeting monthly for the past eighteen months to discuss ways to engage youth on the issue of reducing interpersonal violence. The third focus group, referred to as the 'Self-Advocacy Group' was comprised of four women who had all experience prior interpersonal violence in their lives and had chosen to come together as a group to advocate for change in the ways victim of violence were responded to in the community. Of the eighteen individual interviewees, five were men and thirteen were women. Of the thirty-four group interviewees, twelve were male and twenty-two were female. Two of

the participants were from visible minority groups with the remainder appearing to be Caucasian. More information about the research participants related to their age and employment status is found in the table on the next page.

Demographic Table of Research Participants

34 Interviewees	Gender	Age 20-34	Age 35-44	Age 45-54	Age 55-65+	Employment Status
Women's Self Advocacy Focus Group	F				X	Gov. Employee
A	F				X	Retired
B	F		X			Professional
C	F				X	Retired
D						
Gather the Man Focus Group	M			X		Business
A	M			X		Trades
B	M				X	Retired
C	M				X	Counsellor
D	M		X			Education
E	M			X		Education
F						
Youth and Schools Focus Group	F	X				Student
A	F	X				Education
B	F	X				Social Services
C	F	X				Social Services
D	M		X			Social Services
EH	F		X			Social Services
E						
Graham	M				X	Retired Counsellor
Louise	F			X		Disability
Lacey	M		X			Social Services
Davey	M				X	Retired Physician
Sal	F			X		Counsellor
Jane	F			X		Home Maker
Alexa	F		X			Musician
Katie	F	X				Social Services
Pat	F			X		Social Services
Kath	F				X	Social Services
Jim	M				X	Clergy
Mike	M				X	Clergy
Lou	F			X		Gov. Employee
Lara	F			X		Non-Profit
Police Official (PO)	M			X		Policing
Elena	F				X	Non-Profit
Jene	F				X	Non-Profit
Sofie	F	X				Student/Government

Six participants were in the age range of 20-34 years; six in the age range of 35-44 years; ten in the age range of 45-54 years and twelve in the age range of 55-65 and above. Further distinguishing features are disclosed with care to ensure anonymity.

As noted in the introduction, an evaluation of the *Be the Peace* project was not part of the thesis. However, my involvement with the project did stimulate further interest in exploring what community members would say about cultural and structural influences on interpersonal violence. All interview participants were interested in reducing interpersonal violence in the community as demonstrated by their participation in the project and/or their role in the community.

Interview participants included male and female survivors of prior violence and professionals who worked in the justice, health care, community services and education systems who may also have experienced interpersonal violence in their past. They also included two university students, several elected government officials, two members of the clergy, a town police chief, business owners, psychotherapeutic counsellors, a musician and employees of a women's center and shelter. All interviewees are referred to by pseudonyms.

The majority of individual interviews were completed within a sixty-minute time frame. The focus groups were completed within approximately ninety minutes. Each focus group ended when the last question had been fully discussed. The semi-structured format of the interview schedule enabled a flexibility to accommodate lengthier responses to questions.

Methodology and Research Design

As a co-writer of the grant application and co-coordinator for the first fourteen months of the *Be the Peace* project (April 2012-July 2013), I was very familiar with the project's aims and objectives. In the role of co-coordinator I primarily served as an organizer and facilitator of numerous community meetings. However, when I began to recruit interviewees for this research I had not been engaged in a formal role with *Be the Peace* project during the previous year.

The *Be the Peace* project engaged the community using social media, by holding community forums and by hosting on-going meetings that focused on themes that had emerged using innovative facilitative techniques that included 'Open Space Technology' and 'Appreciative Inquiry'. The results of community forums were accessible to the public in two annual reports that highlighted themes that emerged from this engagement with the community. These themes were influential in the formation of smaller groups who met monthly. These groups became known as:

1. The Women's Self-Advocacy Group
2. Youth and Schools Group
3. Gather the Men Group
4. Improving Sexual Assault Responses Group

I conducted three focus groups with participants who were meeting regularly related to the first three of these four groups. The fourth group which focused on improving responses to sexual assault was unavailable for a focus group because of scheduling difficulties. However, due to the semi-structured nature of the interview schedule and the number of individual

interviews, content related to the focus of this group was explored. The Gather the Men focus group was held in a room in the town library; the Women's Self-Advocacy focus group was held in a room of the Second Story Women's center during an evening and the Youth and Schools focus group was held in a room of the Community Justice center. As mentioned above, one focus group was limited to men and a second to women. The Gather the Men group had been meeting monthly for approximately two years as a part of their involvement with the '*Be the Peace*' project. They came together to explore and discuss the issue of men's violence to women and issues related to masculinity and being a male in this culture. During this same time frame a group of women had also been meeting monthly to discuss the issues related to both being a victim of violence and an agent of social change. Both these groups felt that their discussions would be richer and more in-depth within a same-sex group. An opportunity to explore insights from within each group coupled with the appreciation that the issues of sex and gender are central to this research project influenced the decision to hold a focus group limited to men and a second limited to women. As acknowledged earlier, 'gender filters knowledge' and therefore meeting with these groups presented an opportunity to explore how both sex and gender influence understanding of what is necessary to end men's violence against women. The remaining focus group explored themes related to youth and schools. The coordinators of each group agreed to email or telephone all participants to share a letter outlining the parameters of the research project and information they might wish to consider before agreeing to participate. Please see a copy of this letter in the appendix. This letter made clear that participants were under no

obligation to participate and their participation was voluntary. It was also made clear that they could choose to end their participation at any time. Measures were taken to ensure participants' safety and this was indicated in the letter, which pointed out resources in the community that were available should a participant require debriefing support. I also indicated that I was available for debriefing following the focus groups and individual interviews if this was required.

Individual interviewees were contacted by employing a purposive sampling process. When developing a purposive sample, a researcher can use their expertise and special knowledge about the group to select subjects who are representative or key stakeholders (Berg, 2007). Those identified as key stakeholders in the community were invited to participate in an interview. Although some individuals identified as key stakeholders had not been engaged in the '*Be the Peace'* project, they were nonetheless viewed as having an important and relevant perspective on the issue of interpersonal violence because of their role in the community. For example, participants included representatives of the clergy and an elected official who were interested in this issue but had not been participants of the project. However, the majority of individual interview participants had been engaged with the '*Be the Peace'* project. This is important information as it indicates a familiarity with the topic and a desire among interview participants to take action on this issue. I contacted twenty individuals by email to request an interview and within each focus group the coordinator agreed to contact members either by phone or email. All individuals contacted by email to request an individual interview were known me as a result of prior

involvement with the project. While this knowledge made it easier to identify potential interviewees, it also may have made it more difficult to refuse to participate. Therefore, the right to refuse participation was emphasized in the letter of invitation. Of the twenty individual participants contacted by email all but two individuals agreed to participate. Both the focus groups and individual interviews were guided by the same semi-structured interview schedule. Focus groups were chosen as a method of data collection because of their ability to level the playing field so that each participant feels they can contribute equally. Focus groups are not chats but are semi-structured meetings. Cronin (2008: 227) defines a focus group as consisting of a "small group of individuals, usually numbering between six and ten people, who meet together to express their views about a particular topic defined by the researcher."

Data Analysis

Due to ethical considerations, the sensitive nature of the topics and a concern to ensure confidentiality and anonymity it was decided, in collaboration with my supervisor, not to use either audio or audio-visual technology. I took hand-written notes from both the focus groups and individual interviews that were later transcribed for data analysis. I provided the option to all interview participants to review the transcribed notes and suggest edits or additions. Three interview participants requested their transcripts be emailed to them and returned them with amendments and substantial additions. In her return email, one woman who is a musician, included the lyrics of a song titled *Who Taught Those Boys* that she had written in response to Rehtaeh Parson's experiences (described in Chapter

Two). She gave permission for the words to be published and credited to her and provided a youtube link to access a video of her playing the song. Please see the lyrics and this link to her song in Appendix 4.

I carefully read the findings many times initially searching for broad themes and wrote these on huge pieces of paper posted to a wall. During analysis of the data I began to identify both implicit and explicit ideas which became the themes found in the data. This process, as described by Braun & Clarke (2006) involved searching across the data set to find repeated patterns of meaning. I first hand-wrote these themes on cards and in a second-round I narrowed themes to codes with accompanying quotes, again writing them on cards. I also noted the frequency of similar ideas noted by participants as is evidenced in the findings chapter. In the process of continuing to narrow the themes, I made the decision to showcase the particularly interesting findings that arose out of the interviews and focus groups in fifteen themes in three different sections. Section 1 presents findings related to cultural and structural influences on interpersonal violence; Section 2 presents findings related to the culture of alcohol and links to interpersonal violence and Section 3 presents findings related to community responses to the structural and cultural influences on interpersonal violence. There themes were analyzed within the wider literature within a peacebuilding framework in chapters six, seven and eight.

Ethical Concerns

A: Potential Benefits of Participation in the Project

It was explained that if individuals agree to participate in this research their ideas and experiences may contribute to a broader research literature

that explores how communities create a response to prevent men's violence against women. In this way, participants may appreciate an opportunity to have their 'voice' represented as a contribution within this research.

B: Potential Risks

Concern about research ethics revolves around various issues of harm, consent, privacy and the confidentiality of data (Berg, 2007). As in most qualitative work, case study research shares an intense interest in personal views; those whose views and expressions are portrayed risk exposure and embarrassment, as well as loss of standing, employment, and self-esteem (Stake, 2005). The issue of power is central to ethical concerns in academic research. As a co-writer and former co-coordinator of the 'Be the Peace' project my familiarity with the objectives and hopes of the project could have posed potential ethical challenges that relate to the dual roles of previous grant writer and co-coordinator and current researcher. The ethical concerns are somewhat lessened when it is appreciated that I had not been engaged in a professional role with Be the Peace during the year prior to the interviews. Also, it is important to note that my role as co-coordinator was primarily as an organizer and facilitator and that all prior engagement with participants occurred in a group format. Different members of the group often facilitated group meetings and group participants generated the agenda of these meetings.

Nevertheless, I am aware that this previous role could have been seen to jeopardize my objectivity and been perceived by participants as one of power. I believe these potential ethical challenges are addressed by the grounded feminist epistemology that informs the approach to this research

project. In Bartels' (2012) description of the actionable researcher who is engaged in research to help inform better social policies, the researcher is not a detached observer who produces static representations of reality. Rather, the researcher is enmeshed in the situation of analysis as an active partner of policy actors. This research was guided by this approach and facilitated as a process of collaborative inquiry. My previous experience in the coordinating role of Be the Peace also lent a familiarity with many aspects of the project, and perhaps thereby allowed greater depth of conversation than someone who was unfamiliar with the project. However, having been in the role of co-coordinator I have been steeped in certain expectations and hopes for *Be the Peace.* I was challenged to abandon my previous assumptions, hopes and expectations to engage in a spirit of inquiry. However, as feminist research argues it is inevitable that the researcher's own experiences and consciousness are involved in the research process and are, in fact, integral to it (Stanley & Wise, 1993: 58). I acknowledge that it is important to recognize my social location and that the production of knowledge is a political process. Reflexivity of the feminist researcher entails recognizing her role as a constructing agent, accepting that the researcher is equal to those researched, and most fundamentally holding that "no opinion, belief or other construction of events and persons will be taken as a representation of 'reality' but rather, it will be regarded as a motivated construction subject to critical feminist analytical inquiry (Stanley & Wise, 1993: 200). Such inquiry falls within a critical realist lens by its' scrutiny of the nature of relationships and behavior within these realities to identify causal mechanisms resulting in specific outcomes (Stanley & Wise, 1993;

Parkin, 2014). A critical realist research agenda is context dependent and acknowledges that “the world is stratified by social structures, relationships and interactions that is characterized by power (and powerlessness) each of which are capable of producing and reproducing associative knowledge and behavior as a response” (Parkin 2014: 63). In order to minimize risks as much as possible, I committed to treat participants with respect and dignity at all times and to exercise curiosity and sensitivity to their life experiences.

C: Confidentiality

Both anonymity and confidentiality were addressed during the informed consent process of this project. Before each interview and focus group I read the informed consent form with the proposed interviewees and asked them to sign it if they agreed to the interview process.

Appreciating that in a rural community it is sometimes challenging to conceal identities completely, the research was designed to maximize confidentiality and anonymity through the decision to take hand-written notes rather than audio and/or visual recording of the interviews. These written notes were offered to be shared with each interviewee immediately following the interview as an opportunity to suggest edits and/or further clarification. Each interview participant was asked to agree to a pseudonym. This self-chosen identifier was easily remembered by each participant and served as an identifier on each transcript. These steps both addressed the priority of ensuring confidentiality and permitted a method of identifying each transcript for future reference should participants wish to withdraw, be quoted or amend what they have said. A participant was assured of the possibility of contacting me and providing their pseudonym to acquire access to their

written transcript. This process eliminated the need to record the pseudonym against a real name and have that information stored.

Participant responses were anonymous; this means that each participant was not cited. However, it was important that participants understood that they may be quoted anonymously in the materials that are produced from this study. The notes from the interviews were transcribed and interviewees were told that copies of transcribed interviews could be made available to them as described above. The original notes will be shredded. Upon request, participants were given the option to review the transcribed interviews. These were emailed or mailed directly to those interviewed to allow for any further clarification and/or alterations and deletions within a two-month period following the interview. Three interviewees added material and/or made corrections to the transcriptions as noted above. It was emphasized to all interviewees that participation in this study was entirely voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study during the interview process and for a period of three months following the interviews without giving a reason. A period of three months was suggested as a reasonable amount of time to allow for this process. The transcriptions from the interviews were stored in both a password memory stick, which is a removable flash memory card, and on a password protected document file on my laptop. Participants were informed that they were free to ask any questions at any time and that they were also free to refuse to answer any question at any time. It was also explained that participation in this project would involve an individual interview or participation in a focus group that would require up to one and one half hours of their time.

D: Compensations

No compensation or indemnity was offered to participants.

E: Forms: Consent and Information Sheet

Please see the Appendices for a copy of both the participant consent form and the information sheet.

Limitations of the Study

The sample is limited in terms of representing the general population of Lunenburg County because individuals interviewed had been engaged with the *Be the Peace* project or were key stakeholders related to the area of interpersonal violence. Therefore, the research participants may have been more informed and engaged on this issue than others. Their perspective may also have been influenced by events hosted by the Be the Peace project.

Following analysis of the data the limitations of the measure were evident and could have been enhanced by including more specific questions related to community peacebuilding recommendations.

The study may also have been enhanced by the inclusion of specific demographic questions.

Finally, the decision not to use audio or audio/visual technology to record the interviews meant that the data was captured in hand-written notes which could have limited accuracy in capturing results.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the merits of critical realism as a meta theory framing the ontological, epistemological and theoretical foundations of this

thesis. It then proceeded to a review of the research design that included the ways in which interviewees were recruited, the sample and the manner in which ethical concerns were addressed. The following chapter, the first of three data analysis chapters, moves to explore themes in the data that relate to direct, structural and cultural violence as described by those interviewed.

Chapter Five: Findings

Introduction

This findings chapter presents data that addressed the research question to explore what community members of Lunenburg County say about the structural and cultural influences on interpersonal violence. This data is presented in three sections: Section 1 presents findings related to cultural and structural influences on interpersonal violence; Section 2 presents findings related to the culture of alcohol and links to interpersonal violence and Section 3 presents findings related to community responses to the structural and cultural influences on interpersonal violence. A total of fifteen themes are presented within these sections to showcase the particularly interesting findings that arose out of the interviews and focus groups prior to analyzing them within the wider literature. These findings are analyzed within a peace-building framework in the subsequent three chapters.

Section 1

Cultural and Structural Influences on Interpersonal Violence

Interviewees noted that cultural and structural influences on interpersonal violence were present from birth and throughout the lifespan. These findings are presented within five themes. First, many research participants spoke about the promotion of sexualized and gendered norms, particularly in terms of hypersexualization and pornography that negatively influenced childhood and the experiences of youth. They also spoke about patriarchy, the normalization of violence, the role of colonialism and shame as structural and cultural factors that contributed to violent behavior.

Theme 1: Sexualized and Gendered Norms

The promotion of these norms was noted to begin at birth. For example, one male respondent, Graham, when describing a shopping experience at a toy store, said "there was one section all Barbies and all pink, and another section all Lego[s] and trucks. The socialization starts at birth. It is ingrained, these male and female stereotypes."

Elena also commented on early socialization processes when she observed that boys' clothing is largely associated with blue and girls'with the color pink. She also noted the division in toys and play for boys and girls. She said,

> "It seems worse now than when my kids were little. For example, a boy does not want to play or is pressured not to play with girl toys. We are not giving kids an opportunity to play with another gender. This sets up an otherness and that's kind of fearful. It can be. It can set up a fear or anxiety around it and I think eventually that can contribute to violence".

Lacey shared the following story:

> “A benign example, lucky for me, involves a story about when my son was in a kindergarten program. He was five years old and he would come home with a bruise or an injury every day. He was there three days a week. They said it was ‘boys will be boys’, it’s playing. No effort to mitigate that or address it by the workers in the program. These were women my age and I thought they would think the way I do. It continues to surprise me that there are very deep-seated beliefs about nature—that boys are naturally violent.”

When speaking about raising healthy children, Alexa offered:

> “don’t tell your kids not to cry…don’t be a sissy…what’s your fucking problem? because I think parents, teachers, and kids’ peer groups, as they get older, all reinforce being unauthentic, feeling shame about who you are or how you feel. Like boys are supposed to be the tough guy and girls pretty and cute. This leads to early sexualization and gender stereotypes that help contribute to a violent culture.”

Perhaps this type of understanding contributed to the statement made by an interview participant referred to as “C” in the Gather the Men focus group who believes that, while boys and men experience violence, “males are taught to deny pain.”

Interviewee, ‘Sofie’ also spoke about boys growing up and learning to suppress feelings. She said,

> “I think we also don’t talk about how to deal with emotions in a healthy way—a lot is about emotional suppression which is sort of ignoring the fact that things happen that lead to increased emotion and we don’t have the skills to deal with them in that way”.

Hypersexualization was described by six interview participants as a continuation of promoting restrictive childhood sexualized and gendered norms.

For example, interviewee, Lara, shared the following concerns:

> "What particularly worries me is the violence and gender violence portrayed in mass media that's being consumed by young impressionable minds in magazines, movies, video games, on-line porn, music videos that objectify and harm women and create expectations of their vulnerability and being available for whatever sexual pleasure men may get from them. Even looking at images of women's scantily clad bodies".

Participant 'B', another female interviewee in the Youth and Schools focus group, shared her perspective about how she understood a grade eight female student response to a comment that the TV show 'Vampire Diaries' contained hypersexualized images. She said,

> "When we did that presentation to the Grade 8 class, the girl became angry regarding the image about the vampire diaries—we suggested it was hypersexualized and she got angry. It demonstrates that it was very normal for her to be seeing that."

Another interviewee, Sofie, also spoke about hypersexualization and the link to defining and maintaining traditional gender roles. She said:

> "We talk a lot about hypersexualization and gender roles and it's not necessarily always sexual…but I think they are there still. As much as we see examples of non-traditional gender roles, the implicit ideas regarding roles are really deep and ingrained and lead to people feeling inadequate or fear when they don't conform to those roles".

When responding to the question that explored interview participant's thoughts about the influence of our culture on violence Jene said:

> "Where to begin: we live in a capitalist still patriarchal system which is one of the things culture does—it entitles men to act the way they do (a small portion of men) it's normalized. In the early 70's there was a group of young women in Halifax who organized a youth project to do interviews of women about what issues were affecting them. It became

> quite apparent that violence was impacting on them. So they came up with a 1-800 number helpline. This helpline became so inundated that this became the genesis for Byrony House (a transition house in Halifax). Unfortunately, I don't think it has abated one little bit. If anything the hypersexualized culture that continues to objectify women is fueling this male entitlement. So, we do have to change the culture".

Katie also discussed hypersexualization and linked it to the consumption of alcohol by youth. She said, "Sometimes we are focusing on the influences of hypersexualization but not on the influence of alcohol." Findings related to the role of alcohol in interpersonal violence will be highlighted later in this chapter.

Seven female research participants described pornography as an aspect of culture that is linked to disconnection, objectification and violence.

Participant 'D' of the youth and schools focus group shared her thoughts about the pervasiveness of hypersexualized media and pornography that is accessible to youth. She said,

> "I think we live in a very hypersexualized culture—music videos and especially pornography. It is big and has a big impact on young girls. The way sex is being portrayed in porn is absolutely sexual violence, and it is becoming normalized. Broader sexual assault and date rape—perception of dominant male sexuality and permissible female sexuality. It happens under the surface".

Research participants who had prior knowledge about the prevalence of pornography indicated they were concerned about the impact, especially on youth.

For example, interviewee Elena also spoke about the easy access of youth to pornography. In response to the question that explored her thoughts about the influence of our culture on violence she said:

> “Pornography and rampant use of porn beginning at the average age of 11—70% of the internet is porn and so the opportunity for children boys and girls, men and women to access images that degrade and are violent exists. Women are portrayed as subservient and available anytime for men. Men are portrayed as aggressive, dominant, and powerful. Kids are malleable and somehow this influences how they see girls and women as always available to them”.

Interviewee Alexa spoke about how difficult it may be for a young woman to have an intimate relationship with a young man who has regularly watched pornography. She said,

> “I think porn is a pretty big deal. From what I hear, many boys consume a great deal of porn at surprisingly early ages. I don’t think porn provides a very healthy or realistic set of images or experiences on which to base a relationship. I bet there isn’t a whole lot of equality and kindness happening in a lot of the porn that these boys are watching. I can’t imagine what it would be like to be a young woman entering into a relationship with a young man who has watched hundreds or even thousands of hours of porn and has sexual expectations based in porn”.

Pat said, “Young boys can access pornography and they begin to view sex as what they need versus a part of a healthy relationship”.

Participant ‘C’ of the Women’s Advocacy group also indicated her concern about the impact of pornography on youth.

> “Prone to and being desensitized to porn. Young girls being made into products. Young men made into an image made by propaganda from media and peer groups to become something other than their core essence.”

When asked if she would like to share any additional comments Lara said:

> “When you think of gonzo porn …how is that not considered a hate crime? It’s because of some warped sense of entitlement to women’s

bodies by men. How is the video game 'Grant Theft Auto' that I understand shows men raping women—how is that not a hate crime?"

Interview participant Katie also referenced pornography and introduced the idea of corporate regulation. She said,

> "Corporate regulation would have a big impact so that the government could have more of a role or responsibility in regulating corporations that contribute to violence. So regulation of alcohol, guns, violent media and violent pornography could potentially contribute to reducing violence".

Theme 2: Norms of Patriarchy

Patriarchy was a theme identified specifically by seven of those interviewed as a component that informed the structural and cultural influences related to interpersonal violence. Additionally, it was also indirectly included in comments that referred to men's 'entitlement' to women's bodies or 'ownership' of them.

For example, Pat said "if you spoke to a group of men who have been abusers they will talk about entitlement—how entitlement was just given to them. It's not that they took it, it's something that they got and that can lead to coercion."

Elena suggested we:

> "Take a look at the patriarchal society—the way our economies are structured can exasperate inequity for example. Poverty, racism, dis(ability), age groups—wherever there are systems that have power over …there exists potential for violence. Earth ecology—more aware of our assault against women and environment—it's power over—."

Participant 'C' in the Youth and Schools focus group also spoke about patriarchy.

> “I attended some workshops put on by Dr. Colin Starnes regarding the demise of patriarchy and the rise of violence against women. It was eye-opening. We are not doing enough for young boys especially in today’s society where many are raised by single moms and don’t have a stable male role model”.

Alexa implies that standards of beauty are set by those who sell products that help women aspire to these standards.

She said that she believed that even women with very feminist ideas “shave/wax their body hair and wear make-up because they feel conspicuous and wrong if they don’t do it.” She further explained this connection as follows:

> “And where it ties into the violence issue is that I think it is a form of submitting to the authority of the patriarchy/culture. It says, ‘Yes Boss, I will do what you say–buy your razors and eyeliner and make myself prettier for you, even though I know it’s a waste of time and believe that you are not the boss of me.’ It’s a contradiction to women’s power. I hear many women claim that we “won” in the feminist struggle, but who’s pulling the strings”?

In responding to the question regarding the influence of culture on violence, Jene said “We live in a capitalist, still patriarchal system which is one of the things culture does—it entitles men to act the way they do … it’s normalized.” She also explained that in situational forms of couple violence in which both partners may become violent it was important to note “even though it’s situational, it occurs in a context of a culture that is patriarchal. The two don’t have equal power”.

Theme 3: Violence is Normalized

The interview data indicated that many participants believed that violence was ubiquitous. For example, Participant 'B' of the Youth and Schools focus group said she was surprised by how frequently she hears the following statement: "It wasn't that big of a deal" about a violent experience. She said, "it's something I hear from almost everyone I talk to. In relation to a violent experience whether that be a friend or anyone, I know someone who has it worse."

Participant 'E' of the Youth and Schools focus group indicated that she too believed people normalized their experiences of violence. She said, "normalizing…this happens all the time".

Another interviewee, Louise said, "You see violence everywhere…on TV, movies, in books… but it seems like it's becoming more natural. People are accepting violence more."

Katie said,

> "we are raising children in an environment where how could we expect them to be peaceful when violent behavior is modeled everywhere on popular media including YouTube, film, video games. The impact is on desensitizing us to each other and normalizing it—the normalization of violence is everywhere".

Lou also spoke about parenting:

> "As a parent I have the sense that the softer our society has become on disciplining our children, the worse society has become in terms of being accepting of violence in any other setting. The entertainment industry seems to thrive on violence. It is not socially acceptable to spank your child but it is to see people mutilated on TV. The contrast or paradox in that message seems odd to me. I am not advocating

> spanking children but I would make a distinction regarding intention. My assumption is that spanking is not to hurt, for the sake of hurting but to inflict a consequence of misbehavior and thereby try to change the behavior. Violence in the media and in much of today's society seems to suggest there is some intrinsic reward in being violent or watching violence or somehow participating in an act of violence. That is frightening."

Pat spoke about the highly publicized death of Tina Eisnor (she was killed by her husband in New Germany, Lunenburg County in 2010). Pat reported that she did not believe that her family had known about the services available to them. "Her son came on the media and said he thought everyone lived that way—guns were always present—they just lived that way."

Several interview participants shared their view that not only did our culture permit violence but also promoted it as entertainment and that this influenced violent behavior.

Individual interview participant Graham discussed his view that video games can potentially influence violent behavior by linking this perception to a recent shooting that occurred in the province of New Brunswick. He noted an analysis about this event that was written in a letter to The *Chronicle Herald* newspaper regarding what had led a young man to shoot three Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) officers in the province of New Brunswick in June 2014. The letter writer's point was to highlight the influence of video games on this young man. Graham asked: "Do video games lead to violence? Why sell games that kill? How do we socialize boys? These

games are a part of society—what's driving that? What is the purpose of having video games that involve killing—it's a cultural question".

Another respondent referred to as 'Mike" also spoke about the same young man who shot the three police officers. He said,

> "Justin Burke who shot those three Mounties—his sister when interviewed said his parents had tried to get him help for the past three years and the police said unless he does something violent to himself or someone else we are not able to do anything. That is disempowering for everyone. It is a fine balancing act between ensuring rights and freedoms and the good of society".

Interviewee Katie shared her belief that exposure to violence in the environment does influence violent behavior. She said, "our environment is saturated with violence. Labelling all this as entertainment and if there is nothing to balance this how do we expect to change or reduce rates of violence in society?"

Interviewee Mike expressed his belief that exposure to violence in the news media can result in a decreased sensitivity to violence, while at the same time legitimizing it.

> "The news media treats war and violence as a consumer product. I think it desensitizes us and it numbs people. But another aspect is it encourages and legitimizes violence—it is almost a joy factor for some people. There is a relationship between what we see and hear and how people behave".

Interviewee Jane also reported that she believed violence was pervasive and suggested that this influenced societal views of violence that included how police respond to violence. She said,

> “They allowed it—I don’t know if the word is condone. I find that women are not taken seriously in society. You know yourself when you hear these reports of a man stabbing a woman or a woman beaten up. The police say there is nothing we can do at this time but if it happens again let us know. The seriousness of it is swept under the rug. We see it everyday. Everyday”.

Theme 4: Colonialism

Several individuals who were interviewed linked colonialism with interpersonal violence.

Participant ‘F’ of the Gather the Men Focus group suggested colonialism continues to impact the population. He said,

> “Violence against women is a red herring because the whole system is premised on violence and we have to go right to the center of how we live. For example, North America is begot on slavery, twenty million slaves and eighty million First Nations died”.

Female participant ‘D’ of the Youth and Schools focus group shared the following ideas:

> “We are now, not everywhere, but we are having conversations about systems. We can’t make less or more adjustments. We have to abolish everything. Our structures are so patriarchal and colonial. We can’t make slight adjustments. We need a clean slate. I can’t think of one structure in our society as it is now where I can say awesome. This makes me sad. Our society is inherently colonial”.

Another interviewee in the Youth and Schools focus group, Participant ‘F’ also referenced colonialism. She said, “In a lot of ways, we are all victims of colonialism, racism, capitalism and we are all perpetrators—there is not a dichotomy.”

Elena also referred to colonialism as a guiding principle that had contributed negatively to the ability to develop non-violent interpersonal relationships. She said,

> "The culture of war that the whole world seems to be in. Aggression to other countries or groupings to gain control over them. Use of rape as a tool of war to break a community apart. It's colonialism—taking over somebody else's property, values, resources, diminishing and using force to do it. It trickles down to interpersonal relationships—how kids see them or how their own interpersonal relationships should be. It's a mess."

Theme 5: Shame

In the course of the interview process, ten individuals addressed the topic of shame and its relationship to violence and was noticeably, mentioned by seven male participants. It was described as both a motivating factor that contributed to the perpetuation of violence as well as the result of violence.

Participant 'E' of the Gather the Men focus group said, "We have a shame-based society—if children get it, no wonder they grow up hating themselves. If we can get rid of shame in ourselves, maybe then we can treat others better."

Participant 'C' of the Gather the Men focus group said, "I never knew how much I blame, shame, and guilt people. I do this all the time."

This comment was quickly followed by participant 'F' of the Gather the Men focus group who said, "I am in a new relationship and I do it. It makes me crazy, shame is so normalized in our culture."

Male participants 'E', 'C' and 'F' all refer to shame as a part of themselves that impacts them negatively and that in turn, they pass onto others.

Participant ‘C’ of the Gather the Men focus group shared his believe that shame; blame and guilt were all connected to emotional abuse and violence. He said, “shame, blame and guilt are definitely our culture and perpetuate violence. Sometimes it may not be physical abuse but rather emotionally abuse and then it can progress.”

Several interview participants spoke about restorative justice approaches and possible connections to shame. They indicated that the implementation of these approaches could reflect a structural change in responses to violence.

In reference to the blame and shame victims of violence sometimes experience in relation to their experience of violence, female participant ‘F’ of the Youth and Schools focus group said, “Cops do that, parents do that. Everyone. If we could shift our focus to the perpetrators which has to do with hiring 50 million restorative workers and abolish prisons.”

Participant ‘A’ of the Youth and Schools focus group believed we needed to respond to perpetrators of violence in a better way. She said, “we do need to engage these men in non-shaming ways but not condone behavior. Not shaming you as a person but we are shaming the act. If mental health could get across it’s not, you but your act.”

Participant ‘E’ of the Gather the Men focus group spoke about his partner’s role as a teacher and her efforts to use a restorative justice approach in her classroom. “My wife is doing circles in schools and having great results and at the same time hitting walls because they looked at her as not dealing with the behavior …but the results are fantastic.” Participant ‘E’ stated his believe that the usual way to correct behavior in the classroom

was “by shaming them.”

The research participants seemed to be indicating their belief that experiencing too much shame was not positive and could be a contributing factor in committing acts of violence.

In his reflections about the shame experienced by victims of violence Davey questioned why victims of sexual assault feel shame. He said, “The victim feels shame. Victim’s perceive their essence as profoundly changed and there is a shame attached to it—why should this be shameful?” He went on to say, “Certainly, this issue of the victim of sexual assault being shamed or spoiled goods has to change.”

Alexa spoke about the ways in which youth could experience pressure to conform to gendered norms.

> “I think parents, teachers and kids’ peer groups as they get older all reinforce being unauthentic, feeling shame about who you are or how you feel. Like boys are supposed to the tough guy and girls pretty and cute. This leads to early sexualization and gender stereotypes that help contribute to a violent culture.”

Alexa noted that in the description of the challenges faced by Rehtaeh Parsons, which were discussed in earlier chapters, not least among them, was dealing with humiliating comments made about her by others.

Lara also noted that victims of violence are blamed. She said,

> “I was thinking of that poor woman who accused Lyle Howell (a lawyer in Halifax, Nova Scotia who was accused of sexual assault in 2014) of sexually assaulting her—she’s been completely bludgeoned by people

on blogs—slut shamed. I was thinking of her courage. Just like Rehtaeh Parsons. Just like other women who bring forward their complaints".

Female interviewees also acknowledged the shame that victims of violence often feel and how this is leveraged against them in language and comments that serve to blame the victim. Female participant F of the Youth and Schools focus group stated that to start "a societal shift we need to acknowledge that we victim blame".

Findings: Section 2

The Culture of Alcohol: Links to Interpersonal Violence

In this section I present interview data that indicates that participants believed the culture of alcohol is closely linked to interpersonal violence in Lunenburg County.

This data has been grouped into the following three themes that explore the culture of alcohol; the ways in which alcohol disconnects and numbs; and alcohol's links to patriarchy and violence.

Theme 1: The Culture of Alcohol

Nine interview participants made statements indicating that they understood drinking alcohol and, at times, alcohol abuse was a part of the culture in Lunenburg County. For example, individual interview participant Lou said, "Alcohol is so deeply engrained in our culture it is hard to get people to look at it rationally."

Four participants included the word 'culture' in their responses that are presented below.

Police Official (PO) believed there was a strong correlation between alcohol and violence based on the day-to-day experiences of his police department. He said, “In a lot of ways our culture of violence is linked to a lot of things related to the culture of how we drink. I think the two are interrelated quite closely”.

Interview participant Jene said, “Alcohol is part of our culture—drinking is normalized—binge drinking is normalized. It is normal to drink 24 beer on the weekend.” Jene’s belief that both the use of alcohol and binge drinking has gained a social acceptance within our culture was shared by participant ‘A’ of the ‘Gather the Men’ focus group who said, “we have a binge culture that promotes getting hammered”. Participant ‘C’ of the same group further elaborated on this claim by sharing his belief that “drinking in Lunenburg County is the culture”.

The marketing of alcohol to children can be understood as part of the culture of alcohol as noted by interview participant Katie who indicated her belief that exposure of children and youth to alcohol advertising and marketing is harmful.

> “Marketing of alcohol to children leads to earlier initiation and consumption by children. Reduce inhibitions and then you are exposed to more violence with their peers. For example, when you hear of cases of rape with a 13-year-old you ask what is going on? Alcohol is a massive factor in that. Alcohol is an under-discussed factor.”

According to Police Official (PO) communities need to be aware of the exposure children and youth have to alcohol advertisements. He said,

> “For example, we presented to the board of the new Lunenburg County Leisure Center regarding the role of alcohol advertising on youth and lobbied them to make sure youth would not see alcohol ads. It is a

facility to promote health. We are saying youth use that facility and they don't need to see alcohol ads staring them in the face."

Theme 2: Alcohol Disconnects and Numbs

Interview participant Lacey noted that "victims of violence numb and medicate which can lead to substance dependence". Interview participant 'A' of the 'Women's Advocacy' focus group also described alcohol as having a 'numbing' and calming influence. She indicated that for her, "alcohol is a cover up for problems that are already there. I am speaking from my own experience. It allowed me to stay their longer (remain in a violent situation longer)—it numbed out the experience."

Interview participant 'Jene' confirmed this knowledge and stated that she believed "alcohol is used to cope for women who have suffered violence."

Lacey believes health professionals in emergency rooms sometimes look at individuals with substance abuse problems as if "it's their own problem and they should just stop that behavior". She said, "There can be a bias against dependency as a legitimate health issue and that this can be covering up other trauma."

Pat said, "In our culture it shows that alcohol is a good stress buster, it looks attractive—you watch a movie—you watch anything".

According to Alexa, "disconnection is the real problem and the way people are unable to be themselves because they feel hemmed in by a society that expects them to be something very different from who they really are."

Theme 3: Alcohol: Links to Patriarchy and Violence

Participant 'E' of the Youth and Schools focus group said that at her work place, within a university, several people believed "if people stop drinking sexual violence would end." However, 'E' disagreed: "That's false. We know alcohol is a factor but it's not a root cause. The root cause is patriarchy not alcohol." Several interview participants agreed with 'E' and shared their concern that if alcohol were regarded as the cause of violence other factors would remain invisible. The following table highlights interview responses that described the relationship between alcohol and violence.

Interview Participant	Relationship Between Alcohol and Violence
Participant 'C' of Youth and Schools Focus Group	Alcohol is a tool of patriarchy…it gets used as a tool—to loosen them up—tak[ing] away alcohol does not solve the problem of violence
Participant 'D' of Youth and Schools Focus Group	It's a tool but not a cause of violence
Davey	Alcohol is largely used as an excuse. I don't think it is a driver
Jane	It can play a role but it's not the main trigger
Pat	I would say it's one of the factors of domestic violence but not the cause

Lou	It is my opinion, my observation, without cold, hard facts, that alcohol plays a major role in interpersonal violence. I think it is a facilitator rather than a cause
Participant 'A' of Women's Advocacy Focus Group	Alcohol is not the cause of the problem it facilitates the problem

Individual interview participant Graham said, "If we say in interpersonal violence we just have to deal with the alcohol then we miss the point. We can't use it to minimize or prevent us from exploring the other dynamics and factors that contribute to violence".

While these participants did not believe alcohol caused violence they did believe it was a contributor, a tool, or a factor; that it played a major role which could serve as an excuse for violent behavior.

Individual interview participant Louise was very definite in describing what she felt were strong links between alcohol and violence. She said, "Alcohol plays an absolute part in a lot of the violence—absolutely. Well—you hear people talk—you hear stories and every story of violence I've heard—alcohol or drugs have been involved." This belief is also apparent in comments from participant 'F' of the Gather the Men focus group who referred to alcohol as "setting a match to violence." The following story shared by interview participant, Katie demonstrated quite graphically the manner in which alcohol can inflame violence.

> "I am part of a little research project that is looking at 'King Hits'. We are getting a journalist to report about the number of King Hits in Nova Scotia. A king hit is when an individual, under the influence of alcohol

either harms or kills with one singular hit. This example shows that our culture of alcohol is directly linked to a culture of violence."

Police Official (PO) commented on the relationship between alcohol and violence:

> "I think it's a significant aggravating factor in relation to intimate partner violence. Alcohol is king in terms of the drugs abused in Lunenburg County and while we have some up and comers like marijuana and prescription drugs they are not at the same level as alcohol in terms of their overall effects. I am not advocating for abstinence but alcohol is definitely there when we deal with anything related to violence. I would say 95% of the cases we respond to have alcohol on board."

Participant 'A' of the Gather the Men focus group asked, "Is there a sexual assault with no alcohol?"

Interview participant Sal, who has worked for many years with women, recalled a conversation with a young woman who had phoned to discuss a housing issue.

> "She mentioned her uncle has sex with her. When I asked her how she was doing, she said that's just what he does when he drinks. That's what all men do. So, what struck me is this wasn't even why she called—it was an off-hand comment and it seemed as though that was something that was normal to her."

Lou spoke about how challenging it could be to look at alcohol policy at the community level because of our culture's love of alcohol:

> "Attempts to change the perception that indulging in alcohol is all fun and games get negative reactions. Even the Municipal Alcohol Project (MAP), intended to get municipalities within this province to take a more active role in discouraging overindulgence of alcohol to help alleviate all the negative repercussions that it brings, gets met with resistance. People's defenses go up. They see it as an attack on personal freedom.

I'm not sure how many bad things have to happen before people realize that alcohol is not all fun and games. Nobody wants to be the 'buzz kill' but alcohol creates a lot of problems".

If, as this chapter has attempted to demonstrate, alcohol is a part of our culture that is intimately linked to all forms of interpersonal violence, community peacebuilding frameworks need to incorporate considerations of alcohol in plans to end interpersonal violence.

Findings: Section 3

Community Peacebuilding

This section presents data related to measures community members of Lunenburg County believe are necessary to respond to structural and cultural influences on interpersonal violence.

Theme 1: 'Voice': Breaking the Silence about Violence

Four of the women I interviewed who acknowledged that they had been past victims of interpersonal violence wanted to share their story. They believed it could be a positive individual step that may encourage others to speak out as well.

For example, participant C of the women's advocacy focus group felt that it was important to use her voice: "I wanted to offer my solidarity and bring my own experiences forward to see if I could be involved in change of any sort".

When asked about how individual citizens could take responsibility for ending interpersonal violence Jane responded this way: "That's tough because they don't want to hear or know about it. … It's like child abuse—if they see it they don't want to touch it—they want it to go away".

Participant ‘B’ of the women’s advocacy group spoke about their group’s meeting with the local Royal Canadian Mounted Police to share their experiences related to the processes of reporting violence and subsequent investigations. She said that this “related to what I was going through and if I can contribute in some way. I believe there is value in sharing what I was experiencing [with the police] in how things were played out in practice”. Participant ‘A’ also spoke about sharing her experience as a contribution towards defining the positive change that is needed. When she commented about her hopes for the ‘Be the Peace, Make a Change Project’, she said, “What I was expecting was a chance to do something with other women who have been involved with domestic violence. To be able to do something with my life experience to move the cause forward.”

Individual interviewee Davey wondered if communities being less silent about the ways in which victims of violence are regarded would make a difference in reducing stigma and in how we respond to victims. He wondered if we spoke about the shame a victim often feels, if “that were made explicit—if we actually talked about that—would that change people’s attitudes?”

If an individual learns about a person experiencing interpersonal violence individual interviewee Jim recommended “they have to raise the matter with someone outside in a position of responsibility which could be your supervisor at work. This is often kept a secret and then you often go from battle to battle”.

Individual interview participant Elena emphasized her belief that speaking about experiences of violence helps survivors feel less anxiety.

Elena said she learned that not speaking about our experiences of violence was to be “in conflict with yourself, in anxiety, because our voice is not heard. Bringing back voice in a peaceful way was impactful for me actually.”

Participant ‘A’ of the Gather the Men focus group spoke, from his standpoint as a high school teacher, about the importance of giving voice to experiences of violence. Referring to a high school class that he taught he said, “I just started talking about it—in class everyone was paying attention. It’s important to let people tell stories because it changes things. The silence is partly about the shame.”

Participant ‘C’ of the Youth and Schools focus group also recommended addressing the topic of violence with youth:

> “If a young person is there sometimes they can be impressionable and so if you are able to talk about it, it can make a difference. There are lots of ways to talk about it and we can use the media. In social services we may be reluctant to challenge assumptions and ideas.”

As the following comments continue to indicate, there was consensus among the data that stories of interpersonal violence may serve to raise awareness of the issue that could potentially lead to collective action. For example, participant ‘D’ of the Youth and Schools focus group discussed the personal benefits of giving ‘voice’ to interpersonal violence; she said, “Every time you have these tricky conversations I leave feeling more challenged and with some insight”.

Individual participant Lara also spoke about the importance of talking about violence to “raise the awareness to such a degree that many more people would talk about it, report it and reduce it”.

The ten interview participants quoted above were united in their belief that experiences of violence must not be silenced and that giving voice to these experiences can render visible what is often hidden and could lead to politicizing these issues. All the women interviewed who had been victims of violence in the past wanted to use this experience to help inform a better response. Interview participant 'A' of the Self Advocacy Focus group referred to the 'Idle No More' social movement as asking for "recognition and accountability":

> "At some point we need to be less concerned regarding economics and more with the humanity. …[While] one person is important, we have over-balanced on the one person. … Somehow we need to be able to identify and be responsible in groups and from one group to another".

The following sections include data that describe further aspects identified by research participants that could inform community peacebuilding.

Theme 2: Engaging Boys and Men

Graham stated that his consistent hope in addressing the issue of interpersonal violence was to explore "how to engage men in conversations to end violence against women and girls". However, he said that the ways in which boys and men are influenced by ingrained gendered stereotypes is the reason "why it is so important to talk and have a safe place for men to talk".

Graham also shared: "The only way we are going to put a dent in this issue is if we have men coming together to really talk about these issues—both as men and as Dads and partners and as leaders in the community".

Jene also stated that it was important to engage men: "We have to get the men who want to be our allies to deal with their privilege and not be

defensive". Sal also discussed the importance of working with men to prevent violence against women. She said:

> "We have to work with men to question and explore their own attitudes and beliefs and to help them feel they have the right to them…. We have to work with boys to develop a healthier self-image of themselves and their place in society. We have to start educating them early".

During an event hosted by the 'Be the Peace' project participant 'E' of the Gather the Men focus group stated that he had learned that women feel hurt by men. He said, "the evidence of the amount of hurt when 'Gather the People' met. How quick that came to the surface. We were a group of men coming together to open ourselves to talk regarding violence and we felt violence was coming towards us." With this statement he acknowledges that it often challenging to discuss this topic.

As described by Pat, life in geographically rural areas may shape the culture and local issues:

> "I have always found Lunenburg County to be isolated and even in the media you were hearing stories of domestic violence. I wanted to see a response to domestic violence in Lunenburg County. …"

Pat also pointed to the need to engage boys. She believes that communities needed to have more men involved in what she referred to as "the gender transformative work in the communities engaging men and boys". She said, "Young boys need to be educated to have them stand up against domestic violence".

Sofie suggested that the "role masculinity plays in our society" prescribes acceptable behaviour and communication styles that may constrain boy's and men's ability to express a wide range of emotions and characteristics.

Theme 3: The Politics of 'Othering': Demons and Scapegoats

Several respondents critiqued the manner in which cultural and structural factors, including the justice system, 'othered' perpetrators of violence to differentiate and distance them from 'mainstream' community members. For example, participant ''F of the Gather the Men focus group, who acknowledged he had been abused by a representative of the clergy in his youth, said, "These people aren't parachuted in from Mars. We are all complicit. They need to be treated compassionately and safely". He further qualified this statement by indicating his belief that perpetrators needed to be treated with compassion even if they do not show remorse: "Fr. Hickey showed no remorse—we have to be compassionate despite this…. He's part of us, he is not from Mars. We can't scapegoat them by saying you are totally bad and it has nothing to do with the rest of us".

Participant F said, "I am a visual artist—people are suspicious of me. I am a little bit different. I talked with my students. I want them to go to the core of who they are. I need them to go there in order for them to make their mark honestly". Perhaps in advocating this critical self-reflection Participant 'F' demonstrates his faith in a creative process that will yield a peaceful response.

Interview participant 'E' of the Gather the Men's focus group commented on a national televised interview the police chief had given regarding the shooting of RCMP officers in New Brunswick. He said, "During the interview he called the young man who had shot the police officers

‘vermin’. Can you imagine how shamed that family felt? He was a human being and made bad choices. Yet we demonize him”.

Similarly, when discussing societal responses to perpetrators of violence, interview participant Sofie said, “On a basic level, I would like to see men who commit violence to not be regarded as monsters and when these issues come up don’t just shame them”.

The three individual interview participants quoted above have stated that they do not believe that perpetrators of violence should be viewed as ‘demons’, ‘from mars’, as ‘vermin’ or as ‘monsters’.

Interview participant Graham also shared his view that those who perpetrate violence are not so different from us. He too referred to the shooting of the RCMP officers in New Brunswick: “It is easy to say it’s just these guys even with the recent shootings of the RCMP officers we want to point them out as different from us. I don’t buy that. I don’t see this as a binary.”

He said, “I have worked with men regarding these issues for five years both individually and in groups and my work has always been about how to engage men in conversations to end violence against women and girls”.

When considering the ways in which the criminal justice system responds to perpetrators of violence, many interviewees expressed comments indicating dissatisfaction with current criminal justice practices.

Theme 4: Justice Responses to Interpersonal Violence

Several respondents felt that relatively few individuals who perpetrate interpersonal violence need to be removed from society while several others felt that having prison sentences for serious offences was essential. For

example, interview respondent Mike said, “Dangerous people need to be taken out of our daily lives”. Individual interview respondent Louise took this one step further and shared her belief that “we need a correctional center that works strictly with abusers”.

Respondent ‘C’ of the Gather the Men focus group asked, “How would I want to be treated if I was abused and had abused? With compassion and love and assisted in a way to move beyond—but putting me in jail isn’t going to do shit for me”. Individual interviewee Jim also believed the justice system had to become more responsive to the needs of men: “You have to change a negative into a positive. Putting a guy in jail doesn’t solve anything”. Likewise, interviewee Mike said that the “easiest thing is to throw them in jail. What we can do as a society is to address this behavior and give them the tools”.

Interviewee ‘E’ (female) of the Youth and Schools focus group said that the “legal system is really set up to lock people away so we don’t have to deal with it”. When reflecting on the influence of our culture she said, “We live in a violent society—the way we respond is violence—the criminal justice system is violent. We respond to violence with violence pushing violence on violence it’s a violent system.”

Interview participant Jene also critiqued the justice system from the standpoint of women’s experiences as noted above: “Despite excellent feminist legal scholars for the past 20-25 years … the system has to change at every level to make that system more responsive to needs of women.”

Interview participant Graham shared his belief that there was “a place for restorative justice practices in terms of domestic violence”. Perhaps more

controversially, female participant ‘E’ of the Youth and Schools Focus group said “hire 50 million more restorative folks and let them touch sexual violence or any form of intimate partner violence”.

Interview participant Alexa said: “Some form of restorative justice that brings people together to talk about what went wrong seems like a good idea to me—especially for people who still want to be in a relationship together or who want to ever be in a relationship again; really everyone.”

Participant Elena, in her critique of our current justice system, said:

> “A lawyer told me the other day…she actually used the word revenge. It’s [the justice system] set up to punish perpetrators rather than provide support and rehabilitation. There is no room or little room for a restorative approach which would be supportive to everyone involved and perhaps reduce recidivism rates”.

Participants ‘C’ and ‘E’ of the Youth and Schools focus group were in favor of introducing restorative justice approaches for adults.

Participant ‘C’ said: “These approaches could be used in less significant issues.… Let some of it be tested to see if it is a viable solution. We need to try it.”

Several interview respondents believed that the creation of a community dispute resolution center could assist in resolving disputes and conflicts and teach conflict resolution skills that may prevent situations from escalating to violence. Police Official (PO) stated:

> “Well, I think the community has to be really clear in stating that in no circumstance whatsoever is violence acceptable for solving a situation. Providing alternatives to solving a situation such as a Community Dispute Resolution Center (CDRC) that Be the Peace and other partners are working on…. I think one of the goals of the CDRC is not just to provide a way to resolve their differences peacefully but is also to

provide the skills to solve their problems peacefully and that is a skill set that is lacking".

Individual interview respondents Graham, Lara and Kath also expressed their support for a Community Dispute Resolution Center that is organized and run by community members, while also expressing concern about how it would be funded and supported within the community.

Theme 5: Marketing, Media and Advertising: Community Responses

When reflecting on the access to weapons, Mike said, "We need better [government] legislation" while noting "it is a fine balancing act between ensuring rights and freedoms and the good of society".

Sofie expressed her belief that a discontented community can create policies vital to a community response to interpersonal violence.

> "In terms of policies I think media is a really big one and it really frustrates me after doing education on media literacy that we can't change the ads [rather] we have to change the way we think about the ads. This is ignoring 100 years of advertising knowledge that everything is happening on a subconscious level in terms of gender roles and how someone is valued, how the way sexuality should be…. I think it is not a futile thing to think we can change advertising content".

Interview participant Katie believed that governments have a responsibility to exercise further corporate regulation to reduce violence in communities:

> "Corporate regulation would have a big impact so that the government could have more of a role or responsibility in regulating corporations that contribute to violence. So [this would include] alcohol, guns, violent media and violent pornography that could potentially contribute to violence."

Interview participant ‘C’ of the Youth and Schools focus group thought there were “lots of ways that we can talk about [healthy relationships] using the media”.

Theme 6: The Municipal Alcohol Project: Local Meets Global

Lacy said the Municipal Alcohol Project in Bridgewater revealed “a very high degree of sexual violence in youth and teens and most, if not all of it, was related to alcohol in some way. It’s a local problem here”.

Interview participant Elena also spoke about the Municipal Alcohol Project; She said:

> “If we look at underlying reasons for sexual assault, anxiety, feelings of powerlessness, fear, the link is really strong in sexual violence. This link is trying to be addressed in the Municipal Alcohol Project and I don’t know originally if it had sexual violence in it but now we are trying to make this connection”.

Police Official (PO) also spoke about an expanded role for the Municipal Alcohol Project. He said that those engaged with this project have started “to put meat on the bones” of this initiative. As noted above he explained that an expanded role for this project could include the development of policies to reduce the harms of alcohol consumption.

As he reflected on the visibility of alcohol advertising to youth:

> “I mean you think about it, how odd is it—when you think about the location of the new liquor outlet in Chester [a village in Lunenburg County]—it is located across the street from the Junior High School and is the first thing they will see when they go out the door. This says something about our culture—like having a strip club or a UFC sign across the street”.

Interview participant Louise also commented on the power of alcohol advertising. She said, “Alcohol is so appealing. In a free democracy you can’t

tell people they can't drink but they could do a little less with advertising to make it look so enjoyable".

Individual interviewee Pat commented on the attractive presentation of alcohol as well. She said, "Our culture shows that alcohol is a good stress buster, it looks attractive—you watch a movie—you watch anything".

Interview participant Lara indicated her belief that the municipal governments could initiate strategies to reduce the availability of alcohol: "

> "The municipal government can respond to limit availability like decreasing hours bars are open and the locations where you can purchase it and influence the taxes applied to it. We have to stop really thinking that alcohol is socially acceptable".

Individual interviewee Katie also spoke about the potential power of municipal governments to implement alcohol policy measures. She said:

> "I would advocate for alcohol policy changes on a municipal and provincial level that reduced access to alcohol and increased price and also implemented volumetric pricing [alcohol with higher levels of alcohol content would become more expensive] and limit alcohol advertising in society, especially to children and families".

The remaining themes in this section explore the belief shared by research participants that peace education might lead to non-violence within relationships.

Theme 7: Peace Education

Male participants 'A', 'C' and 'E' of the Gather the Men focus group stated their support for further education in our communities to teach the bystander effect, conflict resolution skills, non-violent communication and empathy. Participant 'A' of the Gather the Men focus group endorsed the "growing movement in school to teach the bystander effect which teaches

that [individuals] can do something [that] can make a big difference". Participant Elena believed such a program could teach students skills to intervene when they experience or witness verbally abusive and/or violent situations.

Interview participant Sal suggested the need to influence the beliefs of children and youth: "Kids have to adopt a belief system of peacefulness".

Remarkably, six interview participants identified components of peace education programs, despite the interview questions not specifically addressing this topic. Their responses are presented in the following chart.

Lacey	"increased education in schools at all levels for healthy relationships and sexual health…..[and] teaching peaceful problem-solving"
Alexa	"teaching better communication skills"
Participant 'C' of the Gather the Men focus group	"non-violent communication and empathetic listening—if this could get in the schools … it would change a lot of things in the world".
Sal	"more resources for people to turn to … skill-building, even online, in the area of communication… support and skill-building [for couples] and there doesn't seem to be a place in the community for that"
Participant 'E' of the Youth and Schools focus group	"conflict resolution courses are needed…. Hurt people marry hurt people and [then] hurt kids. It's a cycle. They need to have a course."

Lara	“I think we need to teach kids how to communicate and resolve conflict. Anytime when we have the opportunity when people go through certain passages in life like starting school, university, a new job or getting married or having kids we should have an expectation that people learn about that stage of life and that would include conflict resolution, communication and relationship management. These skills need to be embedded so no person goes through life with no education on that.”

To complement the teaching of such skills, participant ‘D’ of the Youth and Schools focus group suggested that professionals need to incorporate lessons learned from the trauma field. She said: “I think we lack a trauma-informed approach, especially with men. Especially if we know they grew up with domestic violence….”.

Many interviewees, when considering the peace education needs of youth, felt that families and communities in general, and schools need to mentor and teach conflict resolution skills, non-violent communication and empathy.

Conclusion

This findings chapter presented data that addresses the research question to explore what community members of Lunenburg County say about the structural and cultural influences on interpersonal violence. Section 1 presented findings related to cultural and structural influences on interpersonal violence. These findings were grouped into the following five

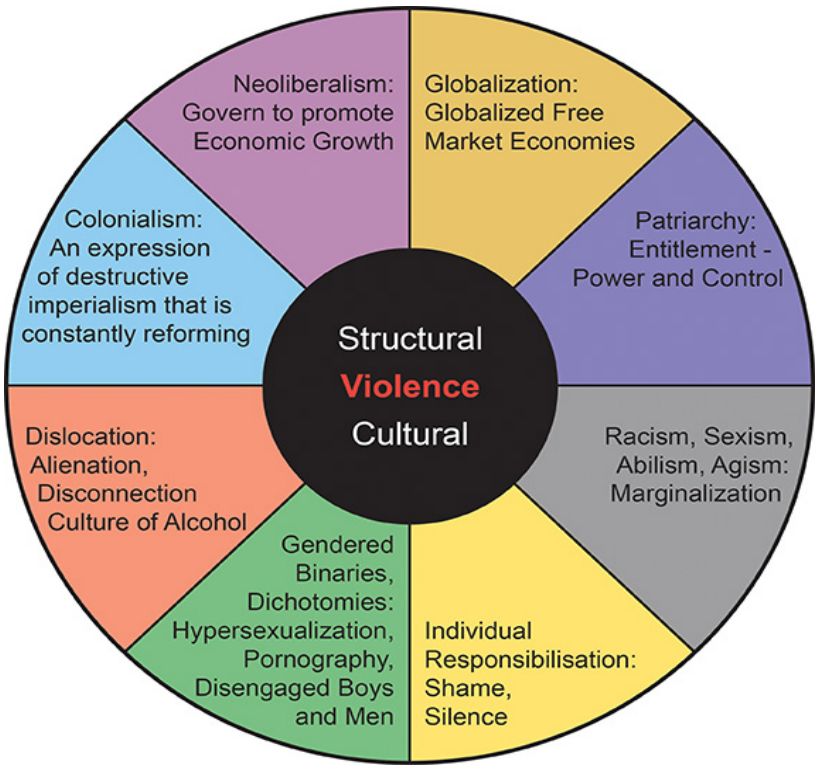
themes that will be discussed and analyzed in Chapter Six: sexualized and gendered norms; norms of patriarchy, violence is normalized, colonialism and shame. Section 2 presented findings related to the culture of alcohol and links to interpersonal violence. These findings were presented within three themes that referred to the culture of alcohol; the ways in which alcohol disconnects and numbs and alcohol's links to patriarchy and will be discussed and analyzed in Chapter Seven. Section 3 discussed measures interview participants defined as important to responding to the structural and cultural influences on interpersonal violence within their communities. These were described within seven themes that included a recognition of breaking the silence about violence; the need to engage boys and men; to explore how we 'other' perpetrators of violence; to consider new justice responses; to critically respond to the deluge of marketing, media and advertising that is linked to violence; to expand the mandate of the municipal alcohol project and offer peace education. These themes will be discussed and analyzed in Chapter Eight.

Chapter Six: Cultural and Structural Influences on Interpersonal Violence

Introduction:

This chapter will begin to present a thematic analysis of the qualitative research data that resulted from conducting individual interviews and focus groups that explored the research question: 'What do community members say about the structural and cultural influences on interpersonal violence?' As noted in the Findings chapter, interviewees perceived that these influences were present from birth and throughout the lifespan. The following chart portrays cultural and structural factors identified in the findings as influencing direct violence.

Chart: Structural and Cultural Violence in Lunenburg County



These findings were presented within the following five themes: *Sexualized and Gendered Norms; Norms of Patriarchy; Violence is Normal; Colonialism* and *Shame* and will be analyzed within a peace-building framework. Two subsequent chapters will present further thematic data analysis related to substance abuse and violence and community peacebuilding.

As previously noted, within a peacebuilding framework, Galtung's (1990) conflict triangles offer a broad description of violence that incorporates an analysis of the interconnections between direct, cultural and structural violence. Before moving to the analysis, I will provide a brief review of relevant definitions. Cultural violence refers to aspects in the culture that either validate violence or obscure our vision from noticing it. Galtung (1990: 291) defined it as "those aspects of culture, the symbolic sphere of our existence- exemplified by religion and ideology, language and art, empirical science and formal science –that can be used to justify or legitimize direct or structural violence." The data indicates a specific focus on cultural violence is relevant to understanding the factors that contribute to experiences of interpersonal violence in Lunenburg County. Structural violence was defined in Chapter Three and is again presented here as describing:

> "harm that happens without direct intent to hurt another and which can be detected by seeing patterns that diminish the potential to live a full and healthy life. Structural violence rises when social patterns, political structures and economic systems diminish, destroy and exclude people from access to basic life needs and greatly lower their potential for human flourishing" (Ramsbotham et al. (2011:50).

While this definition implies that structural violence occurs without direct intent to hurt others it can be argued that colonial processes in Canada that include both structural and cultural violence were deliberately designed. This theme will be discussed later in the chapter.

Finally, Ramsbotham et al. (2011:199) describe peacebuilding as the "project of overcoming structural and cultural violence (conflict transformation)". As such, the following chapters present analysis of the data within a peacebuilding framework.

Theme 1: Sexualized and Gendered Norms

Many interviewees spoke about how the socialization process negatively impacts boys and girls from childhood into adulthood. They acknowledged how early this process begins and how apparent it is in products marketed for babies and young children. Analysis of the data highlighted the ways in which those interviewed identified potential links between the distinct cultural experiences of boys and girls with experiences of violence.

In this research participants are defined by sex and gender as male and female. Co-cultural theory, described in Chapter Four, helps makes visible the ways in which the cultural experience of boys and men differs from girls and women and shapes the way in which both groups adapt to societal expectations as witnessed by communication and behavior patterns. It is also instrumental in highlighting aspects of the culture that have been 'muted' or obscured from our vision that serve to validate violence.

According to Samovar & Porter (1994) co-cultures exist all around us but we are often unaware of them because they are rendered invisible by the

dominant culture. Orbe's (1998: 7) co-cultural communication model rests upon two specific premises:

1. Co-cultural group members –including women, people of color, gays, lesbians/bisexuals, dis(Abled) people and those from a lower socioeconomic status—will share a similar societal positioning that renders them marginalized and underrepresented within dominant structures. The term dis(Abled) is used within an anti-oppressive framework to promote equality and inclusion by emphasizing ability (MacDonald, 2008). This framework is applicable to all groups who experience marginalization.
2. To confront oppressive dominant structures and achieve success, co-cultural group members adopt certain communication orientations when functioning within the confines of public communicative structures.

The field of experience refers to the lived experience of co-cultural group members (Orbe, 1998). It recognizes that lifelong series of experiences influences communication patterns. It is in these experiences that individuals "come to realize the consequences for using certain tactics in different situations" and begin to learn what is appropriate and acceptable (ibid: 11).

Appropriate communication is taught, both directly and indirectly to achieve social success; through approval, a positive identity, and effective exchange of information (Giles et al. 1987). The field of experience, or lived experience, influences the learning process of effective co-cultural communication (Orbe, 1998). For example, Orbe notes that early in the

social development of children, the boundaries for what is and what is not appropriate are learned. As part of their 'field of experience,' what is learned in childhood contributes to what children and youth identify as important in gaining social acceptance. It informs their behavior and non-verbal and verbal communication. Furthermore, it modifies relational expectations and interactions. As we turn to the data analysis it begins with the recognition of research participants that highly sexualized and gendered norms begin to be established birth and carry forth to adulthood. According to Orbe (1998), our experiences within social institutions teach and influence what constitutes appropriate and effective communication. What is considered appropriate in one setting is often different for girls than it is for boys and these behavioural expectations are defined by childhood norms based on gender. In this way, many girls and boys are 'boxed in'. They are 'boxed in' by these social norms that attribute specific behavior as appropriate to each gender.

As noted in the findings Lacey shared, it appeared that the women who worked at her five-year-old son's daycare normalized the daily bruises he experienced from contact with other young boys as 'boys will be boys'. Lacey said she was surprised at what she believed were "very deep-seated beliefs about nature—that boys are naturally violent."

I do not believe this is a reasonable assumption because, as noted above, co-cultural theory asserts that our lived experiences including those within social institutions and in our families, teach what is and what is not appropriate communication (Orbe, 1998). While this comment above indicates a belief in a biological disposition to violence I assert throughout this thesis that violence is not a genetic or naturalistic trait. Barker (2015)

indicates that the “research, from Darwin onwards, is overwhelming that we survived and thrived as a species because our biological and social propensity to live in connection and close cooperation with others is vastly stronger than any propensity to kill or harm each other”. While Lacey is surprised that women her age think in this way, she also describes this situation as benign. However, addressing early experiences of aggressive behavior with firm responses that this is not acceptable behavior may contribute to the development of environments in which it is not permissible for little boys to act out aggressively. A firm response to such acts of aggression in childhood can provide formative lessons in learning non-violent forms of communication (Wolfe, 2007).

By explaining away the aggressive incidents as typical play for boys, the daycare workers’ response to Lacey’s concern for her son’s injuries demonstrates a narrow belief in what it means to be a ‘boy’ and this necessarily entails a natural propensity to aggression. Such acceptance of this view can be understood as legitimizing and condoning a certain level of violent behavior. If in this circumstance, the boy who is the victim of aggressive acts is told that such behavior is normal and that he should not be upset or shed tears about it, a pattern could hypothetically begin to develop in which aggression for boys is normalized and emotional responses to violence are minimized. If such behaviour is normalized and not regulated or addressed, as this story implies, could it not be asked whether these employees are part of a societal structure which permits a certain level of boys’ violent behaviour?

Just as the story above described daily bruises and injuries as normal consequences of ‘what boys do’, some parents have absorbed similar messages and practices that they pass on to their children. When speaking about raising healthy children, Alexa indicated that parents, teachers and even peer groups may give the message that it is not OK to cry at a young age and reinforce the idea that “boys are supposed to be the tough guy and girls pretty and cute”. She indicated that these early messages contribute to “early sexualization and gender stereotypes that help contribute to a violent culture.”

Alexa highlights that the expectations of individuals who are significant in a child’s life can be influential. If we understand the scope of these relationships as part of the ‘field of experience’ of childhood the potential for influencing a child’s developing sense of identity becomes apparent. Some might argue that Alexa is not the best ‘expert’ on the topic and that her comments are speculative. While not all parents or teachers and kids reinforce these behaviors, Alexa is pointing out that, unfortunately some may not represent positive and peaceful role models.

The pressures boys face to be tough, to act like a man, not to cry, and not to express emotion have been clearly articulated by Katz (2006) whose work is recognized internationally for his gendered violence and educational programming that emphasized engaging boys and men. As noted in chapter three, Katz (2006) explains that boys grow up in a world that narrowly scripts for them what it means to be a man. He suggests that institutional and cultural factors powerfully define an acceptable code of behavior for boys

that propel them to be ‘tough’, ‘strong’ and ‘in control’. To deviate from this social code of behavior is to be viewed as less than ‘manly’ (ibid).

Perhaps this type of understanding contributed to the statement made by an interview participant referred to as ‘C’ in the Gather the Men focus group who believes that, while boys and men experience violence, “males are taught to deny pain.”

Interviewee, ‘Sofie’ also spoke about boys growing up and learning to suppress feelings.

These perceptions are confirmed by the research of Brown (2012) who explored what girls do to conform to norms in the United States and is summarized as girls must be nice, thin, modest, and use all available resources for appearance. When researchers explored what boys and men needed to do to conform to social norms they noted pressure to demonstrate emotional control followed by prioritizing work and pursuit of status and violence (ibid, 2012).

While these messages do seem pervasive for boys in western culture there are also many contemporary and historical examples of boys and men who have been emotionally expressive. The relatively recent popularity of masculinity studies deconstructs many of these cultural influences and celebrates a broader range of expressions of masculinity that validates emotional expression and the valuing of nurturing and caring relationships (Courtenay 2000; Barker, 2005; Connell, 2005; katz, 2006; Porter, 2006; Oughton 2007; Tomsen 2008; Pease, 2010; Basile & Black, 2011; Minerson, et al. 2011; Lindsay 2012; Backhouse et al. 2015; O’Neill 2015).

Many of the observations and experiences of interviewees reflected their perceptions of trends in social norms that I interrogate by referring to relevant research. The responses of those interviewed were often informed by research and wide exposure to relevant literature. This may reflect an acquaintance with the relevant research by many of the interviewees who had been engaged in previous efforts to reduce interpersonal violence.

Several interviewees referred to the marketing of children's clothing, toys, and games as distinctly gendered. Interview participant 'Elena' expressed her concern that when boys do not play with girls and girl toys it "sets up an otherness and that's kind of fearful. It can be. It can set up a fear or anxiety around it and I think eventually that can contribute to violence".

Elena is pointing out the relational dynamics in children's play that she believes can encourage a separation between boys and girls. She believes this may play a contributory role in violence through the process of 'othering'. Othering, is described by Johnston et al. (2004) as a process that identifies those that are thought to be different from oneself or the mainstream, and it can reinforce and reproduce positions of domination and subordination. Researchers who study the impact of early childhood experiences on child development share Elena's concern that children's play can have far-reaching implications. For example, as noted above, Rippon et al. (2014) has explored the impact of the gendered division in children's toys and games. In a speech Rippon was reported as saying, "the world is full of stereotypical attitudes and unconscious bias. It is full of the drip, drip, drip of the gendered environment" (Knapton, 2014).

Rippon believes the gender differences in toys can limit potential in girls to explore subjects in school that include math, physics and other science based knowledge areas (ibid). The gender division in child play often promotes training for boys, whereas girls' toys are more about nurturing (Rippon, et al. 2014).

Boys and girl's clothing is also gendered from a young age and is very pronounced in children's costumes. For example, the Halloween costumes boys wear often reflect the current 'action figures' that are popular in cartoons and movies. Boys may dress in costumes that represent authoritative and muscular action figures such as, 'batman', 'spiderman' or 'ironman'.

These gendered stereotypes that are promoted in early childhood may appear innocuous, however they do have an influence on what form of behaviour and communication processes are expected for boys and girls and do affect children's emerging sense of self or 'identity' (Kilbourne, 2000; Katz, 2006; & Levin & Kilbourne, 2009). For example, a young boy wearing an 'Iron Man' costume may integrate an understanding of what it means to be a boy is to be strong and tough.

Levin & Kilbourne (2009) describe the power of advertising in promoting rigid gender roles among children.

> "gender roles modeled for children have become increasingly polarized and rigid. A narrow definition of femininity and sexuality encourages girls to focus heavily on appearance and sex appeal. They learn at a very young age that their value is determined by how beautiful, thin, "hot," and sexy they are. And boys, who get a very narrow definition of masculinity that promotes insensitivity and macho behavior, are taught

to judge girls based on how close they come to an artificial, impossible, and shallow ideal".

Remarkably, most girls claim that advertising has no impact on them, but may acknowledge it impacts others. This denial has been referred to as 'defensive othering' and is described by Ezzell (2009: 112) as occurring when "subordinates accept the legitimacy of a devalued identity imposed by the dominant group, but then say in effect, 'there are indeed Others to whom this applies, but it does not apply to me". For girls who are targeted by the advertising industry, there is a pressure placed on them to strive to achieve the idealized image of what a young girl should be (Kilbourne, 2000; Levin & Kilbourne, 2009). While such pressure may be denied, Levin & Kibourne's (2009) research demonstrates it impacts almost all girls. In this analysis, it is evident that the standpoint of Levin and Kilbourne (2009) differs from those girls who claim that advertising does not impact them. This example could be representative of a 'false consciousness' argument wherein the subordinated identity is denied autonomy. Denying the girls claim that advertising does not impact them could be a suggestion that their standpoint or perspective is not valid because they do not share the perspective of Levin & Kilbourne (2009) who have expertise in this area. This is reconciled within the epistemology of a standpoint framework because its' emphasis on feminism implies a political analysis. "In feminist standpoint theory, material commonalities in women's realities are now only the starting point for the development of a standpoint" (Park, 2008: 52). For Hirschmann (1997: 77) feminism is the product of ongoing political negotiation within and among various groups of women who theorize from the standpoint of their experience of gender, race, class, age

and other oppressions. Therefore, within the epistemological framework of feminist standpoint theory, the perspective of those who oppose and critique sexism and other forms of oppression are privileged (Hundleby, 1997: 31). Indeed, the works of critical social theorist Antonio Gramsci indicate that the questioning of the ruling ideological hegemony, which can become culturally normative, is the beginning of developing a critical consciousness (Hoare & Smith, 1971). These ideas have been more fully explored in the methodology chapter that highlighted the liberatory nature of the critical feminist perspective and feminist standpoint theory.

Ezzell (2009) describes two subcategories of 'defensive othering' that he refers to as identifying with dominants and normative identification. To identify with dominants is explained as identifying with the values associated with dominant group members. Normative identification describes a process of identifying with the normative values prescribed by dominants to subordinated group members.

These processes will be explored in further sections of this chapter as they connect with the themes identified by research participants that describe negative cultural impacts on youth.

Orbe (1998) explained that our field of experience consists of our lived experience and the influence of our past experiences is important in choosing how we communicate with others. "Through a lifelong series of experiences, co-cultural group members learn how to enact a variety of practices; they also come to realize the consequences for using certain tactics in different situations" (Orbe, 1998: 11). Shortly following birth children are exposed to societal and cultural norms that instruct them about

what is and is not appropriate and acceptable. Children learn what is appropriate communication through their experiences with family members and wider social institutions. This thesis aims to highlight the powerful cultural factors, that include multiple forms of social media that are an influential component of co-cultural group members lived experience.

The gendered division in children's toys and clothing are influential 'field of experience' factors that impact all children as they proceed to adulthood and learn what is the most effective way to communicate and gain social acceptance.

Hypersexualization was described by six interview participants as a continuation of promoting of a process that constrains and negatively impacts many children and youth. While this is a strong claim, I agree that the influence of hypersexualization is widespread. This claim is supported by a report conducted in Nova Scotia that explored the impact of hypersexualization (Tobin, 2012). This report was informed by information collected by conducting workshops and interviews across the province. It stated that hypersexualization was described as normal and pervasive and this is confirmed by a growing amount of literature (American Psychological Association 2007; Levin & Kilbourne, 2009; Rae Langton, 2009; Tobin, 2012; Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association, 2014).

Co-cultural theory acknowledges that these processes as a part of the field of experiences for children and youth, are influential in shaping the developing social identity and communication patterns of co-cultural group members (Orbe, 1998). Participants implied that hypersexualization processes impacted the formation of identity as youth developed and was

related to interpersonal violence. The American Psychological Association (2007) states that hypersexualization occurs when a person's worth is assessed in relation to their sexual appeal in the following ways: "a person is held to a standard that equates narrowly defined physical attractiveness with being sexy; a person is sexually objectified (a thing for others' sexual use); and/or sexuality is inappropriately imposed on a person".

The Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (2014) published the following under the title "Hypersexualization of Tweens and Teens"':

> "If you follow the digital world at all (and that's all of you) you will have seen the recent surge of the latest data on how the internet, cellphones, social media, clothing style shifts, music videos and tween/teen movies have impacted the hypersexualization or our children today".

Statistics to support this include the recognition that the pre-teen clothing market is worth an estimated 150 billion dollars a year and that one third of clothing apparel was considered "sexualized" in a survey of 15 major pre-teen clothing sites (Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association, 2014). Another survey showed that 22% of teenage girl's report having had anal sex in the last 60 days (ibid). The Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (2014) report that is estimated that 70-80% of teenage boys watch pornography and that one-third admit to sending a naked or near naked picture to their 'crush'.

The influences of hypersexualization have become more pervasive in the last two decades and is linked to the impact of social media and the availability of the internet to many tweens and teens (American Psychological

Association 2007; Levin & Kilbourne, 2009; Rae Langton, 2009; Tobin, 2012; Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association, 2014).

Interviewee Lara said she worried about “the violence and gender violence portrayed in mass media that’s being consumed by young impressionable minds.” She expressed concern that popular “magazines, movies, video games, on-line porn, music videos that objectify and harm women” could influence young women and men. She believed that they portrayed women as vulnerable and available for the sexual pleasure of men.

Female participant ‘B’ of the Youth and Schools focus group, also shared her perspective about how she understood a grade eight female student’s angry response to a comment that the TV show ‘Vampire Diaries’ contained hypersexualized images. She believed it demonstrated that it was very normal for her to be see these images and this student defended this television show and did not want to acknowledge a critique of it. Participant ‘B’ interprets such reluctance as an acceptance or normalization of hypersexualized images.

While Luksza (2015: 430) acknowledges a critique of contemporary vampire fiction that amplifies gendered stereotypes and roles, she cautions that a flat dismissal on these grounds may alienate feminist scholars from the female subjects they wish to study. In doing so, they may fail to understand what contributes to the wide popularity of the *Vampire Diaries* TV series and what emancipatory potential may exist, if any, in these narratives. Along with Luksza (2015: 441) I believe it is important to heed her caution that such rejections risk “enclosing itself in a “feminism for feminists only” zone and allow space to continually explore meaning making among youth who are the primary audience of this series.

Research that explores the impact of hypersexualization is growing and indicates that it results in an objectification process for youth that often limits their ability and/or willingness to critique hypersexualization. For example, Rae Langton (2009: 228) has indicated that objectification results in a reduction of a person to a body and a focus on their appearance that serves to silence their critique of such processes. If a teenaged female youth aspires to look like a television female star who is regarded as glamorous and if her field of experience has included ongoing exposure to hypersexualized images it is unlikely she will have developed, or wish to develop a strong critique of such images. Girls seek and often find a level of social acceptance and reward based on their appearance that can reinforce a process of objectification (Levin & Kilbourne, 2009).

When interviewee, Sofie spoke about hypersexualization and the link to defining and maintaining traditional gender roles she acknowledged we were beginning to see more examples of non-traditional gender roles. However, she believed there powerful “implicit ideas regarding roles are really deep and ingrained and lead to people feeling inadequate or fear when they don’t conform to those roles”. This statement indicates the pressure that can be felt to conform to these traditional gender roles.

Interviewee Jene shared her belief that violence against women had not decreased and that our hypersexualized culture contributed to the objectification of women and fueled male entitlement. She is also suggesting that in her informed opinion, as one who has worked in the anti-violence field for forty years that we need to change the culture to reduce interpersonal violence.

Bridges and Jensen (2011) write that it may seem odd to have to defend the claim that the study of sexually explicit material is relevant to the study of violence against women because we live in a "pornography-saturated culture in which women are routinely targets of sexualized intrusion and violence" (Bridges & Jensen, 2011: 133). Pornography has become mainstream and is a lucrative multi-billion dollar industry. That it is so ubiquitous, while at the same time remaining a primarily private pastime makes pornography a difficult topic to discuss.

Bridges and Jensen (2011: 133) explore the following questions: How are gender, power, and sexuality constructed in contemporary mass-marketed pornography? Is there a relationship between those constructions and the levels of sexual intrusion and violence in contemporary culture? What are the effects on people's intimate experiences? How does the normalizing of such pornography affect the culture?

Their research noted recurrent themes in mainstream pornography. These themes indicate that all women always want sex from men, women like all the sexual acts that men perform or demand, and any woman who does not at first realize this can be easily persuaded with a little force (Bridges & Jensen, 2011: 138).

Pornography is a contentious topic and has also been described as a feminist form of expression and labor in which women and other minorities are engaged in the production of power and pleasure (Comella, 2013; Taormino, et al. 2013). Comella's (2013: 2547) research counters the notion that pornography and/or the adult sex industry is inherently harmful to women and "antithetical to feminism, revealing instead that the logic of

consumer capitalism can be reworked and refashioned to be conducive to feminist social change". The position taken by Taomino et al. (2013) and Comella (2013) illuminate a diversity of positions on pornography within feminism that range from condemnation to exploring the ways in which it may contribute to women's empowerment (Dines, 2010; Bridges & Jensen, 2011).

Seven female research participants described pornography as an aspect of culture that is linked to disconnection, objectification and violence.

Participant 'D' of the Youth and Schools focus group shared her thoughts about the pervasiveness of hypersexualized media and pornography as portraying sex as sexual violence that was becoming normalized. She believed this was linked to broader sexual assault and date rape. Her comment was a powerful indicator of the ways in which she understood cultural factors as pivotal in influencing direct violence. If we return to the definition of cultural violence as referring to aspects in the culture that either validate violence or obscure our vision from noticing it perhaps the influence of hypersexualize media and pornography can be understood as both validating violence and obscuring our vision form noticing it. As participant 'D' of the Youth and Schools focus group stated, these processes happen under the surface.

The title of a recent conference in rural Nova Scotia, 'The Impact of Growing Up in Our PORN Culture', also indicates a belief that pornography is normalized. The conference hosts extended an invitation on their website to join them to discuss the public health crisis that is pornography (Tri-County Women's Center.org, 2014). Their conference website also highlights the following information about pornography:

- 12-17 year-olds are the largest consumers of internet porn.
- An estimated 70-80% of teenage boys watch porn.
- Nearly 80% of unwanted exposure to pornography occurs at home.
- Porn sites get more visitors per month than Netflix, Amazon and Twitter combined
- The internet now hosts 4.2 million porn websites (ibid)

Research participants who had prior knowledge about the prevalence of pornography
indicated they were concerned about the impact, especially on youth.

For example, interviewee ‘Elena’ also spoke about the easy access of youth to pornography. In response to the question that explored her thoughts about the influence of our culture on violence she said the rampant use of porn beginning at age eleven reinforced negative gendered and sexualized stereotypes that influenced the ways in which youth perceived themselves. She believed that 70% of the internet is porn, (an inflated percentage) and expressed her concern about the malleability of kids and that exposure to porn influenced how boys saw “girls and women as always available to them”.

In this comment Elena is noting her belief that the pervasiveness of pornography does have an impact on the development of youth. It is not known exactly what percentage of the internet portrays pornography but 70% is likely not an accurate figure. For example, Ogas & Gaddam (2012) report that 13% of global web searches were for sexual content. The Internet Filter Review (2014) indicated there were over 68 million daily searches for

pornography in the United States and that this figure represented 25% of all daily searches in 2006.

Elena's belief that pornography does have a negative influence on youth's ability to have a healthy relationship is confirmed by Dines (2010) who's research demonstrates that pornography is negatively influencing the sexual template of developing adolescent boys and girls in a way that limits their ability to sustain a healthy relationship. She focuses primarily on boys because her research confirms that more boys watch pornography than do girls. Dines (2010) also outlines the ways in which pornography is linked to violence against women, particularly 'gonzo' porn, which she reports is the most common form of pornography accessed on the internet. Dines (2010: xi) describes this genre of porn, the largest money maker for the industry as depicting "hard-core, body-punishing sex in which women are demeaned and debased". Later in her book she describes this form of porn as violence against women (ibid).

While there is a growing amount of research and concern about the harmful impacts of pornography, there is also a significant debate within feminism that suggests that not all pornography is harmful. Bridges & Jensen (2011) describe three major feminist positions:

1. Anti-pornography feminists, typically identified as radical feminists; 2. Anti-censorship feminists who are critical of misogynistic pornography but reject the legal approach radical feminists proposed and 3. A pro-pornography group that valorizes pornography as a discourse that subverts traditional gender norms and has liberatory potential for women's sexuality.

While it is important to recognize this debate, all interview participants who spoke about pornography linked it to a negative impact on youth and/or violence against women. Their responses may have been influenced by their prior involvement with the Be the Peace project which pointed to the harms of pornography; particularly for youth and are representative of a limited sample size within a rural population (Bookchin, 2013).

Struthers (2010) argues that pornography does not occur in the context of healthy relationships or intimacy. His suggestion that pornography objectifies human beings is one that has been portrayed in a recent Hollywood movie about pornography.

Joseph Gordon-Levitt, who directed, wrote, and starred in a film about pornography titled *Don Jon*, stated that pornography results in "a disconnection from what's really in front of you" (Diu, 2013). He expanded on this theme by explaining that pornography results in objectification. He said, "rather than engaging with a unique individual and listening to what the other has to say, right at this moment, we put people in boxes with labels. We objectify each other" (Diu, 2013). His comments support the argument that pornography results in objectification and limits the possibility for healthy relationships.

Objectification has been defined by Nussbaum (1995: 257) as having seven identifiable features that are involved in the idea of treating a person as an object:

1. instrumentality: the treatment of a person as a tool for the objectified purposes
2. denial of autonomy: the treatment of a person as lacking in autonomy
3. inertness: the treatment of a person as lacking in agency and activity
4. fungibility: treatment of a person as interchangeable with other objects

5. violability: the treatment of a person as lacking in boundary-integrity
6. ownership: the treatment of a person as something that is owned by another (can be bought or sold)
7. denial of subjectivity: the treatment of a person as something whose experiences and feelings (if any) need not be taken into account.

Langton (2009: 228–229) has added three more features to Nussbaum's list:

8. reduction to body: the treatment of a person as identified with their body, or body parts;
9. reduction to appearance: the treatment of a person primarily in terms of how they look, or how they appear to the senses;
10. silencing: the treatment of a person as if they are silent, lacking the capacity to speak.

The silencing effect of objectification processes, such as those involved in pornography, are central in understanding the relevance of co-cultural communication theory to the topic of violence against women. Co-cultural theory's focus on communication can make visible, or audible, voices that have been muted. If we return to the three feminist positions on pornography described above it is possible to suggest that the voices of the anti-pornography feminists diminish the voices of those who believe in its' liberatory potential as noted by Comella (2013). According to Ciclitira (2002: 191) researchers' personal bias regarding the negative impacts of pornography are influenced by the way it is defined and if it is distinguished by non-violence or violence. The provision of inadequate definitions is further compounded by failing to examine sociocultural and historical factors that influence how "pornography is viewed, defined, produced and distributed" (Ciclitira, 2002: 192). If, as noted above, objectification processes result in

'silencing', it highlights the need of those who have been 'objectified' to speak about their experiences.

Interviewee 'Alexa' spoke about how difficult it may be for a young woman to have an intimate relationship with a young man who has regularly watched pornography. She worried that porn did not provide a healthy or realistic portrayal of values to support a healthy relationship. Her comments are speculative and point to the need for further research. If pornography has become normalized it then becomes a part of mainstream culture having gained a certain acceptability. Therefore, it may become challenging for those who feel objectified by pornography to put into words their objections to it. It is challenging to object to what is accepted as a norm, however recent researchers suggest that many women internalize their objectification experiences and therefore do not view their experiences critically (American Psychological Association, 2007; Calogero, 2013).

Calogero (2013) argues that self-objectification is a prime psychological result for girls and women living in an objectifying milieu (Calogero, 2013). This process occurs "when the objectifying gaze is turned inward, such that women view themselves through the perspective of an observer and engage in chronic self-surveillance" (Calogero, 2013: 312). Calogero (2013) presents research findings that support the novel proposition that greater self-objectification results in greater support for traditional gender roles (e.g. that of a sex object) and less effort to engage in a critical perspective that could result in social action. She writes: "in line with system-justification theory, participation in such a system requires one's justification of it—hence the strong ideological endorsement by women of existing gender roles and

relations" (Calogero, 2013: 317). Therefore, this research suggests women who have internalized self-objectification process are less likely to object to the potential harms of pornography. However, pro-pornography feminists critique this view as a method to silence other perspectives by indicating they lack an ability to critically interrogate the impacts of pornography and other social and cultural factors (Comella, 2013; Taomino et al. 2013). As noted above, in view of the massive distribution of pornography a focus on eliminating potential harm to those engaged in its' production and consumption is most relevant to the aims of this thesis and I argue this requires ongoing critical interrogation of diverse perspectives and further research.

Theme 2: Norms of Patriarchy

Patriarchy was a theme identified by many of those interviewed. While this theme may have arisen repeatedly, the "form" of perceived patriarchal influence differed. However, each respondent who spoke about this theme shared a common perception that patriarchy was a limiting influence on the development of both genders.

For example, Participant 'C' in the Youth and Schools focus group referenced it in relation to our communities "not doing enough for young boys" especially those raised by single moms.

Participant 'C' is acknowledging that in her view, adult stable role models are often absent from the lives of boys and that this may reflect that they place less value on relationships and the nurturing role parenthood implies. While this statement acknowledges a limited view of men in terms of the positive nurturance they provide, it implies a belief in their capacity to

do so and the importance of such relationships. These beliefs are increasingly acknowledged by men who argue for increased involvement of men in parenting and other caregiving roles and that such involvement is a form of resistance to patriarchal values (Porter, 2006; Zhang & Fuller 2011; Barker, 2014). Participant 'C' is correct in assuming a lack of adult male involvement as parents. Zhang & Fuller (2011) state that one-third of U.S. children are living in families without a biological father. This trend also holds true for Lunenburg County. As noted in the second chapter, the Lunenburg County Community Fund (2010) describes the composition of families in terms of married, common-law and lone-parent. It noted that families having one child; 20% were married, 27% were common-law and 65% were lone-parent. Families with two children were comprised of 19% married, 10% common-law and 26% were lone-parent. Of those families who had three or more children 5% were married, 3% were common-law and 9% were lone-parent. It is interesting to note that in all three categories lone-parent families were most highly represented and that lone-parent families have almost 50% less income than couple families. About 8 in 10 lone-parent families were female lone-parent families in 2010, counting for 12.8% of all census families, while male lone-parent families represented 3.5% of all census families. This indicates that most lone-parents are women and have significantly less income as reported in Chapter two.

Kruger, et al. (2014) completed research exploring the importance of the involvement to men as parents in a small Midwestern city in the United States and presented the results in an article titled: *Local Scarcity of Adult Men Predicts Youth Assault Rates*. Their research concludes that

interventions that promote both social and material support from fathers and other adult male role models “may ameliorate risk factors for youth violence” (Kruger, et al. 2014: 123). They suggest that the involvement of fathers in their children’s lives may promote the health and safety of the community.

Alexa expressed her thoughts about patriarchy as related to the pressures women felt to conform to what she referred to as the authority of patriarchy. Alexa is beginning to explore who is promoting these norms. She is linking patriarchy with the commercialization of beauty products. She implies that standards of beauty are set by those who sell products that help women aspire to these standards.

The perceptions Alexa are consistent with comments made by Brown (2012). Brown’s (2012) lecture titled ‘*Listening to Shame’* is featured on a YouTube website and has been viewed by more than seven million individuals. In this lecture Brown (2012) profiles research that indicates girls who want to fit in are given the message that they should use all available resources for appearance.

Brown’s (2012) research validates what Alexa argues, which is that girls are under a great deal of pressure to conform to standards of beauty which, as noted earlier are linked to profit made largely by men.

In responding to the question regarding the influence of culture on violence, Jene pointed out in situational forms of couple violence, in which both partners may become violent, it was important to note “even though it’s situational, it occurs in a context of a culture that is patriarchal. The two don’t have equal power”.

Michael Johnson's (2008) work that depicts violent typologies describes the most common form of interpersonal violence as situational violence. Situational violence is described as violence that arises from a current stressor and is not based on a man's need for power and control. In this form of violence, women also engage in aggressive acts and it is sometimes implied a gender symmetry exists. Jene cautioned that it was crucial for those responding to this form of violence to realize that women are still living within a patriarchal system in which they do not have equal power.

Although Alexa's comments were about the beauty industry and capitalism, her perception nonetheless is linked to Jene's as both emphasize the imbalance of power which can serve to maintain patriarchal systems.

Theme 3: Violence is Normal

The interview data indicated that many participants believed that violence was ubiquitous. For example, Participant 'B' of the Youth and Schools focus group said she was surprised by how frequently she hears statements that minimize their experiences of violence. Participant 'E' of the Youth and Schools focus group indicated that she believed people normalized their experiences of violence. She said, "normalizing…this happens all the time".

Co-cultural theory explains these types of responses as attempts by a co-cultural group to assimilate to the dominant culture. In attempting to understand the normalization of violence it is helpful to look at the experiences of boys and men as one cultural group and girls and women as a second cultural group. However, Co-cultural theory acknowledges that individuals within these two cultural groups have shared and different fields

of experience. Therefore, the pressure on men and boys to minimize violence would result from different experiences than that of girls and women. If, as has been argued, boys and men, and girls and women experience different normative pressure to conform, it is instructive to examine the ways in which both assimilate to the dominant culture. For boys and men, their experiences of violence are legitimized and they are taught to be tough; to be in emotional control. Their experience of violence is not that 'big a deal'. For women and girls, they are taught to acquiesce; to be silent about their experiences of violence. They are also taught 'it's not that big a deal'.

Co-cultural theory highlights that one's individual thoughts and experiences play a role in the minimization of women's experiences of violence and their muted response regarding it. According to Weitz (2002), the individual frame of reference consists of psychological and sociological contexts. The psychological context is based on personality, intent, and mentality and is influenced by the sociological, which includes social gender norms, control, social exchange, and peer group pressure. These contexts may contribute to internalized blame for having been a victim of violence that is experienced by some women and girls, and their subsequent silence. If men and boys may have experienced violence as acceptable may feel pressure to conform. For those men and boys who have experienced violence and trauma in their childhood it can become normalized (Minerson et al. 2011). From a psychological perspective, women often believe that men are not held accountable for their acts of violence and that they do not have a voice.

Another interviewee, Louise said, “You see [violence] everywhere…on TV, movies, books… but it seems like it’s becoming more natural. People are accepting violence more.”

That boys and men do experience a significant amount of violence in their lives that may include bullying, homophobia and violence in sports, serves to normalize it and “sustains the stereotypes that violence is part of being a real man, that violence is an acceptable way to resolve conflict” (Minerson et al. 2011: 20). If boys experience or witness violence in their lives it becomes the most powerful indicator of whether they will use violence against women later in their lives (ibid). However, it is very important to recognized that not all boys who experience or witness violence against women in their childhoods will exercise violence as adults (Minerson et al. 2011).

Pat spoke about the highly publicized death of Tina Eisnor (she was killed by her husband in New Germany, Lunenburg County in 2010). Pat reported her assessment of the media appearances made by Tina’s son as indicating he had normalized his violent exposure within the family. She said, “he thought everyone lived that way—guns were always present—they just lived that way.”

The Canadian Pediatric Society (2003) stated that the average Canadian child sees 12,000 violent acts on television per year that include many depictions of murder and rape (Ford-Jones & Nieman 2003). However, other studies indicate different rates of exposure to violence on television and this difference may be accounted for by different definitions of aggression and violence and differences in study methodologies (Bushman &

Anderson, 2015). For example, Mrug et al. (2015) state that the average American 18-year old observes approximately 6,000 violent acts on television and in movies per year. Browne & Hamilton-Giachritsis (2005: 703) indicate an average of 20-25 violent acts are shown on children's television programs each hour; a rate which differs from the numbers above. They report on a large media violence study that demonstrated consistency in children's television viewing across twenty-three countries in which 93% of children in electrified urban or rural areas spent more than 50% of their leisure time watching television (Browne & Hamilton-Giachritsis, 2005: 703). They indicate 61% of children's television programming in the United States contained violence and that high exposure to television is likely to lead to high exposure to television violence (ibid, 2005).

The Canadian Pediatric Society (2003) report that more than 1,000 studies confirm that exposure to heavy doses of television violence increases aggressive behaviour, particularly in boys. They also highlight that the following groups of children may be more vulnerable to violent media:

- children from minority and immigrant groups
- emotionally disturbed children
- children with learning disabilities
- children who are abused by their parents
- children in families in distress (Canadian Pediatric Society, 2003).

This point adds complexity to this issue as it affirms that exposure to violence may have different impacts on different youth and that some may be more susceptible than others.

Several interview participants shared their view that not only did our culture permit violence but also promoted it as entertainment and that this potentially influenced violent behaviour. This view has been controversial and the work of Freedman (2002) offers a provocative challenge to the perception that violence in the media does influence violent behavior. His argument concludes with his observation that in recent years television and films have been as violent as ever and violent video games have become more and more popular, yet during this period there has been a dramatic decrease in violent crime (Freedman, 2002; Pinker, 2011). Pinker's (2011) research provides a historical account of violence noting significant evidence to support his argument that violence has been decreasing.

However, as argued throughout this thesis, there have not been recent dramatic decreases in violence against women in Nova Scotia or in many parts of the world. As noted previously, the World Health Organization (2013) reported that physical or sexual violence is experienced by more than one third of women globally. In Bushman & Anderson's (2015) work exploring the notion of causality in the effects of media violence they conclude that while it is not the cause of aggression and violent behavior it is an important risk factor.

Many researchers support the view that ongoing exposure to violence in media is linked to violent behaviour (O'Toole, 2000; Anderson, et al. 2003; Murray, 2008 and Ybarra, et al. 2008; Strasburger, 2009). Research by Anderson & Bushman (2001) demonstrates that exposure to television and movie violence, and playing violent video games, is linked to aggression: "A meta-analytic review of the video game research literature reveals that

violent video games increase aggressive behaviour in children and young adults." Interview participant Graham discussed his view that video games can potentially influence violent behavior by linking this perception to a shooting that occurred in the province of New Brunswick. He noted an analysis about this event that was written in a letter to the *Chronicle Herald* newspaper regarding what had led a young man to shoot three Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) officers in the province of New Brunswick in June 2014. The letter writer's point was to highlight the influence of video games on this young man. Graham wonders why violent video games are sold if they can lead to violent behavior. He asked: "Why sell games that kill? How do we socialize boys? These games are a part of society—what's driving that?—it's a cultural question".

Graham is broadening his questions about video games and their potential influence on a vulnerable young person to an exploration of the influence of culture. Such questions link to points raised by Bushman & Anderson (2015: 1818) who argue that it is now time to move towards complex public policy questions that will involve an examination of personal and societal values, as well as practical and legal issues.

Another respondent referred to as 'Mike" also spoke about the same young man who shot the three police officers. Mike believes that somehow society should come to terms with assisting abused persons and, in an ongoing way we have done little to stop abuse or to help the abuser. He said that the parents of this young man had sought services for their son and that "the police said unless he does something violent to himself or someone else

we are not able to do anything". Mike commented on the difficulty of balancing individual rights and freedom with the good of society.

His family clearly believed that Justin Burke had mental health issues that contributed to his likelihood of perpetrating violent acts and, as stated above, these mental health issues may have contributed to a heightened susceptibility to the negative influence of violent video games.

Interviewee Katie shared her belief that "our environment is saturated with violence" that does influence violent behavior and asked how do we balance this with community expectations and efforts aimed at reducing interpersonal violence.

Interviewee Mike expressed his belief that "the news media treats war and violence as a consumer product" which could result in a decreased sensitivity to violence, while at the same time legitimizing it. He said, "I think it desensitizes us and it numbs people".

Interviewee Jane also reported that she believed violence was pervasive and suggested that this influenced societal views of violence. She said, "they allowed it—I don't know if the word is condone. I find that women are not taken seriously in society" and that this may influence how police respond to violence. She said, "We see it everyday. Everyday".

Jane's comments concur with the perceptions of previous interviewees and with a substantial body of research that indicates that ongoing exposure to violence can result in desensitization to it (O'Toole, 2000; Anderson, et al. 2003; Canadian Pediatric Society, 2003; Murray, 2008; Strasburger, 2009 and Ybarra, et al. 2008).

Theme 4: Colonialism

Several individuals who were interviewed linked colonialism with the perpetuation of violence in our culture. Participant F suggested that a focus on violence against women is a narrow lens in which to examine violence and a broader lens would acknowledge that our society rests on a colonial system that was founded on violence. As an indigenous woman, Grande (2003: 329) states that she theorizes and acts "in public life from a standpoint that presumes decolonization [not feminism] as the central political project". She explains this standpoint as beginning with "the understanding that the collective oppression of indigenous women results primarily from colonialism—a multidimensional force underwritten by Western Christianity, defined by white supremacy, and fueled by global capitalism" (Grande, 2003: 329). She argues that the project of decolonization acknowledges significant diversity of lived experience while recognizing the existence and power of grand narratives that include colonialism, global capitalism and the enlightenment (ibid, 2003). According to Grande (2003: 332) white-stream feminists employ modernist assumptions of power in their critique of patriarchy as a universal and totalizing system and that women of color have taken issue "with this undertheorizing of patriarchy". For example, hooks (1989) concludes that Western feminism prioritizes the resistance of patriarchy over the resistance of racism and other forms of domination and assumes that this should be central to the political agenda for females globally. She writes:

> "to speculate that an oppositional division between men and women existed in early human communities is to impose on the past, on these non-white groups, a worldview that fits all too neatly within

contemporary feminist paradigms that name men as the enemy and woman as the victim" (Hooks, 1989: 19).

I believe it is this rationale that may have influenced the comments of participant F of the Gather the Men Focus group. He appears to suggest that colonialism continues to impact the entire population and that a focus on violence perpetuated against women obscures this wider analysis. While violence against women is a primary focus of this thesis it is important not to let this focus detract our view from the historical and ongoing colonial violence that impacts all members of our communities; men and women, as was noted in the literature review (Grande, 2003; Battiste, 2015; Blackstock, 2015; Lowman & Barker, 2015; Sinclair & Wilson, 2015).

Other interviewees shared similar ideas about the pervasive influence of colonialism. For example, when asked what societal structural changes are needed to end violence, a female participant of the Youth and Schools focus group referred to as D shared a related view indicating her belief that our societal structures all needed to be changed. She said they were influenced by both patriarchy and colonialism and needed to be abolished because "we need a clean slate… Our society is inherently colonial".

Participant D's comments indicate a belief that violence against women is complex and is not simply an issue of a man exercising power over a woman. Her comments position this violence within a political and social context informed by patriarchy and colonialism.

As noted in the literature review, Tuhiwai Smith (2002) suggestion that colonialism is an ongoing process that still affects people's lives today is

supported by a growing amount of literature (Battiste, 2015; Blackstock, 2015, Sinclair & Wilson, 2015).

Yasmin Jiwani (2006: xii) writes:

> "In focusing on discourses of denial, then, my aim is to explicate the links between different forms of structural violence as well as demonstrate how discursive fields—the parameters defining a particular subject matter in terms of how it is thought of and talked about—operate in different realms of social life. These are the mediations [Race, Gender, and Violence] I refer to in the book's title, for it is in their communicative expression, their continual reinforcement of a particular common-sense view of the world, that separations between structural and more interpersonal forms of violence are maintained. It is these discursive strategies and moves by which one kind of violence gets recognized and another erased, trivialized, or contained within categories that evacuate the violation of violence that I attend to…"

These comments highlight the links between structural violence and interpersonal violence and reveal that communication in the form of discourses can serve to minimize and deny experiences of violence and these connections. In other words, those who influence dominant discourses can serve to mute other, less powerful voices.

Another interviewee in the Youth and Schools focus group, Participant F, also referenced colonialism when exploring the question of whether men who commit violence have also been victims of it, and how this should influence how we respond to them. She said, "In a lot of ways, we are all victims of colonialism, racism, capitalism and we are all perpetrators—there is not a dichotomy."

These comments are aligned with those of Grande, 2003 & Jiwani, 2006 who emphasizes the importance of recognizing the existence of grand

narratives that include capitalism, racism and colonialism. Participant F suggests we are all victims and participants within these grand narratives and indicates her belief that men who commit acts of violence, who may have also been victims of violence, are not so different from all citizens who are impacted by, and also perpetuate colonialism, racism and capitalism. In this statement she is implying that perpetrators of violence should be responded to in ways we would hope to experience if we had committed an act of violence. This focus group went on to discuss the need for trauma-informed approaches to better respond both to victims and perpetrators of violence. This will be discussed further in Chapter seven.

Elena also referred to colonialism as a guiding principle that had contributed negatively to the ability to develop non-violent interpersonal relationships. She suggested that colonialism was defined by using force to take possession of another's property, values and resources. She said colonialism "trickles down to interpersonal relationships…It's a mess."

Perhaps a simple visual depiction of environmental devastation can best highlight this mutual process of loss. Indigenous people in Canada have decried the logging companies who have cut down old forest trees. Once these trees are cut down, both Indigenous people and 'Settlers' or the 'Colonizers' are faced with the empty landscape. Likewise, both victims of interpersonal violence and perpetrators are also confronted with 'an empty landscape'. As noted in the literature review,

Vecchio & Lockard (2004) describe an overarching colonial structure that is supported by sexism, racism, classism, homophobia and other oppressive social patterns that negatively impact the entire society.

The comments and analysis above related to colonialism move the discussion of the origins of violence against women, and other forms of interpersonal violence, beyond a focus on individual attempts to exert power and control to acknowledge the role of broad structural and cultural factors.

Likewise, the concept of shame, discussed below, moved from a focus on individual experience to again acknowledge the role of broad cultural and structural factors in shaping an individual's lived experience.

Theme 5 Shame: the ultimate 'Box'

During the interview process, the topic of shame and its relationship to violence emerged frequently, and was noticeably, often brought up by male participants. Shame was described as having been normalized as a part of our interpersonal relationships, located within our culture and institutional systems. It was described as both a motivating factor that contributed to the perpetuation of violence as well as the result of violence. For perpetrators and victims of violence alike, shame was understood as a silencer, preventing both from seeking help or telling others about their experiences.

For several research participants shame was regarded as a negative factor.

Participant 'E' of the Gather the Men focus group said he thought we had a shame-based society that contributed to children growing up not liking themselves and not treating others well. Participant 'C' said that he frequently used shaming practices as a tactic by blaming and quilting others. This comment was quickly followed by participant 'F' who said he also found himself doing this in a new relationship and that while did not like to

recognize this, he felt it was in part an indicator of how normalized shame was in our culture.

Male participants E, C and F all refer to shame as a part of themselves that impacts them negatively and that in turn, they pass onto others. Shame, understood like this has a contagion element. In this way, these participants reflect their understanding of being both a victim and a perpetrator of shame. Shepard and Rabinowitz (2013) in their research about the power of shame in men who are depressed share their findings which indicate men's socialization experiences leave them particularly vulnerable to shame. Their research suggests that being shamed by both peers and parents are primary in teaching them to conform to boy code norms. These researchers refer to Pollack's (1998) boy code norms as encompassing

> "four primary rules defining masculinity: men do not show weakness or openly show pain; men demonstrate daring, bravado, and an attraction to violence; men achieve status, dominance, and power over others' men do not express tender feelings, such as dependence, warmth, and empathy" (Shepard & Rabinowitz, 2013: 452).

Shepard and Rabinowitz (2013) suggest that deviation from this code of behaviour will result in experiencing shame based on a perceived lack of social acceptance. Fessler's (2004) cross-cultural research on shame suggests that while shame can function in many ways, the most important purpose is to motivate conformity to further a sense of social acceptance. The pressure to conform to boy code norms may, as described earlier in the chapter, facilitates emotional disconnection. Therefore, even while attempting to achieve a sense of social acceptance, there is implied a sense of loss.

It is interesting to consider how this dynamic may be related to the ways in which some respondents saw themselves as both victims and perpetrators of colonialism. If the experiences of being both victims and perpetrators of colonialism are understood as shameful, could this shame be related to white privilege or colonial heritage? Could this shame be understood as placing pressure to conform that relates to the boy code's emphasis on not showing weakness, an attraction to violence, demonstrating power over others' and not expressing warmth or empathy? As Fessler (2004: 207) notes, available data is consistent with the "proposition that shame evolved from a rank-related emotion". The male participants who spoke about shame imply both an individual and collective sense of shame. Their individual sense of shame informs the ways they interact in their intimate relationships. However, this individual sense of shame is, in turn, informed by a broader collective shame that is perpetuated by societal norms that have been influenced by colonialism. This broader collective and cultural sense of shame may be related to concepts of historical and current responsibility.

Research in this area indicates that it is important not to confuse shame with guilt. Hartling, et al. (2000) note that experiences of shame or humiliation often alienate and silence individuals and in extreme cases lead them to what has been described as a feeling of condemned isolation. Intense feelings of shame are not usually constructive and can also contribute to substance abuse, mental health conditions such as mood disorders and anxiety, and violence (Hartling, et al. 2000; Barker, 2003; Zehr, 2008 & Brown, 2012). This, according to Brown (2012) is contrasted with feelings of guilt, which are often described as more transitory because it

indicates an acceptance of responsibility for a wrongful act and a willingness to move forward. Feelings of guilt help us acknowledge we have done something wrong, whereas intense feelings of shame can result in feeling we are wrong.

Participant C of the Gather the Men focus group shared his believe that shame; blame and guilt were all connected to emotional abuse and violence.

Several interview participants spoke about restorative justice approaches and possible connections to shame. The role of shaming within restorative justice appears to be a controversial one. Shame has been described by Braithwaite (1989) as central to restorative practices, which are based on Indigenous cultural practices and place an emphasis on the role of shame in restoring inter-subjective relationships. Braithwaite (1989) introduced the topic of re-integrative shaming which he believed could be an effective element of restorative conferencing if balanced appropriately.

An effective restorative approach is described by Retzinger and Scheff (2000) as a delicate balance - requiring enough shame to bring home the seriousness of the offence, but not enough to humiliate and harden. They suggest that, too much shame can be as destructive as too little. They caution that humiliating the offender in the conference makes it difficult to accept responsibility for the harm that has been done and thereby help remove shame from the victim (ibid, 2000). To be successful, they note that shame should be removed from the victim and that the process should help facilitate the perpetrator accepting all shame connected with the crime.

In reference to the blame and shame victims of violence sometimes experience, participant F of the Youth and Schools focus group thought

shifting the blame to perpetrators and then hiring many restorative workers to replace prisons would be a positive step. Her comment appears to agree with the statements above, that an important part of restorative approaches involves perpetrators accepting responsibility for the harm they have caused.

Participant E of the Gather the Men focus group spoke about his partner's role as a teacher and about her efforts to use a restorative justice approach in her classroom. While she found these approaches highly effective she did not have the support of the school administration. He believed this was because these methods differed from the usual way to correct behavior in the classroom which was, according to him, "by shaming them." In this way, he is implying that shaming students is not part of the restorative justice approach and portrays a negative view of shame.

Shame is a controversial subject, particularly as it relates to violence. As noted in the literature review in chapter three, Gilligan's internationally renowned work with male prisoners positions violence as the only alternative to being shamed, in other people's eyes and even in one's own (Gilligan, 2009). He suggests that men commit violent acts to avoid being shamed. He writes, "there is a deep psychological truth in the fact that the word for overwhelming shame—mortification—comes from Latin roots meaning 'to make dead (mors, mortis, dead, death, plus facere, to make)" (Gilligan, 2009: 245). Gilligan's research (2009) confirms the need for a delicate balance in employing shame with perpetrators of violence in restorative approaches because so much of violence is motivated by feelings of shame. The research participants seemed to be aware that experiencing too much shame

was not positive and could be a contributing factor in committing acts of violence.

In his reflections about the shame experienced by victims of violence individual interview participant, Davey, questioned why victims of sexual assault felt shame and "perceive their essence as profoundly changed?" He spoke about the need not to think of victims of sexual assault as "spoiled goods" and recommended "actually" talking about this. He believed silence regarding experiences of interpersonal violence and sexual assault served to maintain "the continuation of dysfunctional abusive relationships and harmful attitudes".

Here, Davey is confirming that the shame that victims of violence feel; especially victims of sexual assault, serves a muting function.

The stigma felt by victims of violence that includes sexual assault is a universal phenomenon. It has been noted by the World Health Organization (2013) that the difficulty acquiring accurate statistics about the rates of violence against women is a result of it being hidden, in part, resulting from the stigma felt by victims.

This process has also been discussed by Lederach & Lederach (2010) who describe contexts in Africa, South America, and the United States in which women's voices were silenced regarding their experiences of violence. They point out that the stigma women felt in South Africa during the Truth and Reconciliation processes obliged them to speak only of their son's, brothers' and male partner's experiences. They chose to mute their voices in a context in which they understood such experiences voiced could be defined as "pariah". In choosing to remain silent about their own experiences

of violence, women hope to avoid the judgment that would be unfairly cast upon them that could result in their rejection by their family and community (ibid).

As noted in chapter three, the media coverage regarding the death of seventeen year-old Rehtaeh Parsons demonstrated that she had experienced a great deal of judgment and stigma before she took her own life as a result of having been sexually assaulted.

Alexa noted that in the description of the challenges faced by Rehtaeh Parsons, not least among them, was dealing with humiliating comments made about her by others. Lara also noted that victims of violence are blamed and what she referred to as “slut-shamed”. Armstrong, et al. (2014) writes about the practice of slut-shaming as involving maligning women for presumed sexual activity and that it is common among both genders.

Female interviewees also acknowledged the shame that victims of violence often feel and how this is leveraged against them in language and comments that serve to blame the victim. Female participant F of the Youth and Schools focus group stated that to begin shifting these attitudes in society we need to first acknowledge that we do blame victims.

The perceptions and beliefs shared by research participants indicate that blame and shame are intrinsically linked. If we can blame and shame others, both for their experiences of violence and the perpetuation of it, we can abscond our responsibility as individuals and as a society to offer support to both.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the themes that emerged among the responses of the thirty-four interviewees which highlighted the ways in cultural and

structural violence are linked to violence against women. Co-cultural theory highlighted that men and women's experiences are different. Women have often adapted to experiences of violence by assimilating to the broader culture. This assimilation can be facilitated by their choice to 'mute' their voice and minimize their descriptions of the impact of the violence they do experience. This process is facilitated by a culture that often does not provide a safety for victims and normalizes violence. Men may adapt to the ways in which they are socialized and 'boxed in' by normalizing violence and by internalizing beliefs that they must be a 'tough guy'. Both men and women are silenced by a culture that perpetuates a hypersexualized gendered socialization process that begins at birth.

In relation to violence against women interview participants spoke about the cultural influences of colonialism, patriarchy, hypersexualization, pornography, and the gendered division found in children's toys, clothes, and games. Several participants shared their belief that violence is pervasive and had become normalized in our culture and in our entertainment. Several research participants also expressed their belief that this ongoing and sustained exposure to violence did influence behaviour. They shared their perceptions about the ways in which forms of cultural and structural violence negatively impact all citizens. Questions that emerge from participant responses include: Do we deny the impacts of colonialism or engage in truth and reconciliation processes? Do we teach media literacy or change the media? Do we teach women to be safe or create safety? Do we tell boys to be violent and expect them not to be? Do we hypersexualize boys and girls and expect them not to be? Do we promote a sense of boys and girls as

commodities? Do we objectify and exploit boys and girls and expect them not to feel ‘disconnected?

The responses from the research participants indicated their perception that both structural and cultural violence influences the development of both boys and girls from birth to adult life. They described a culture in which violence is normalized and is influenced by colonialism, highly sexualized and gendered norms, patriarchy and shame.

Chapter Seven: Substance Abuse and Peacebuilding: "Alcohol Sets a Match to Violence"

Introduction

The findings support published research that demonstrates alcohol can be linked to interpersonal violence. Interview data also supports a broad understanding of substance abuse and addiction as socially constructed and not solely the result of individual or medical problems. Understandings of substance abuse and/or addiction as a response to a person's lived experience differ from those that suggest it results from personal moral failings or genetic predispositions. While personality and genetic influences play a role, I argue in this chapter that the social environment and the lived experiences of individuals also plays a significant role in determining who will develop a predisposition to substance abuse and/or addiction (Alexander, 2009; Mate, 2009). This chapter focuses specifically on the role of alcohol and violence because alcohol has been identified as the most commonly abused substance in Nova Scotia as highlighted in the literature review which noted that almost 30% of Nova Scotians identify as heavy drinkers. This is not to discount the role of other substances that may be influential in acts of interpersonal violence or the knowledge that often individuals may use alcohol in combination with other substances.

The inter-connections between alcohol and violence discussed in the findings indicate that substance abuse and acts of violence can harm relationships and often occur in contexts that promote alienation and dislocation. Interview responses have been grouped into the following three themes, which are discussed and analyzed within a peacebuilding framework

below: '*the culture of alcohol'*; '*alcohol disconnects and numbs*'; '*alcohol: links to patriarchy and violence'*.

Theme 1: The Culture of Alcohol

Nine interview participants made statements indicating that they understood drinking alcohol and, at times, alcohol abuse was a part of the culture in Lunenburg County. This perception was evident in comments that described binge drinking as a cultural norm (please see Findings chapter).

Validation for these beliefs can be found in the provincial alcohol strategy. In 2007, the Nova Scotia government implemented the first provincial alcohol strategy in the country. The title, *Changing the Culture of Alcohol Use in Nova Scotia*, indicated that the provincial department of health recognized a need to make changes in our culture that would result in safer alcohol use (Addiction Services Alcohol Task Group, 2007).

A more recent *Alcohol Indicators Report* noted that Nova Scotians were more likely than all Canadians to engage in heavy monthly and/or weekly drinking (Stockwell 2011). This was again confirmed in the first Nova Scotia Government's Health Profile (2015) that indicated 28% of Nova Scotians report heavy drinking in the past month as contrasted with 24% nationally. This report defined heavy drinking as "consuming five or more drinks on one occasion for men and four or more drinks on one occasion for women" (Stockwell, 2011:11). However, because many statistics do not recognize this distinction between men and women this report relied on the generalized acceptance of five or more drinks for both men and women to define heavy drinking. "This is the definition more consistently used in survey data for all

age groups: adults, university students, and underage youth" (Stockwell, 2011: 11). If heavy drinking was defined as four or more drinks on one occasion for women it is likely that these rates would be higher.

In Nova Scotia, youth are the highest consumers of alcohol, with the 20–34 age group having the highest rate of heavy monthly drinking (41.1 per cent) followed by the 12-19 age group (35.8 per cent). The Alcohol Indicators report highlighted that, among Nova Scotian students in grades, 7,9,10 and 12, the average age of first use of alcohol was 12.9 years (Stockwell, 2011: 10). Other major findings included:

- Heavy-drinking rates in the province are high. In 2007–2008, 38.9 per cent of males and 17.5 per cent of females engaged in heavy monthly drinking. During the same time frame, 17.9 per cent of males and 7.0 per cent of females engaged in heavy weekly drinking.
- Heavy-drinking rates are particularly high among young adults. In 2004, the usual consumption pattern for 51.7 per cent of Nova Scotia university undergraduate students was five or more drinks on the days they drank, with 27.2 per cent of all university students drinking heavily at least once a week.
- Heavy drinking by underage youth has remained stable over the years, but heavy drinking by underage female youth is now on par with underage male youth (Stockwell, 2011: 2).

In other provinces, the increased availability of alcohol has been linked to increases in alcohol use and notably, interpersonal violence. During the year following privatization of liquor stores in the province of Alberta in 1993, Wells et al. (2013) report that the rates of violence involving alcohol rose

dramatically, increasing from 40 to 60 per cent. This research adds to the growing body of evidence that infer a correlation between increased availability and subsequent consumption of alcohol with higher rates of violence, including domestic violence, child maltreatment and sexual abuse, youth violence, and homicide, in addition to a range of health issues (Wells et al. 2013). These findings also make a strong argument against the privatization of alcohol sales.

When marketing alcohol there appears to be considerable reluctance to explore the harms of alcohol, including links to violence. For example, Ross et al. (2015: 363) point out that youth in the United States from 2001-2005 were 239 times more likely to see an alcohol ad than a responsible drinking ad and 32 times more likely to see an alcohol ad than an ad discouraging drinking and driving.

The Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation attempts to balance their social responsibility mandate with their goal of increasing sales of alcohol to Nova Scotian's. While this is challenging, Wells, et al. (2013) research indicates that provincial oversight is more effective than what could happen if Nova Scotian alcohol retailers were privatized. Efforts to change the culture of alcohol are challenged by the goal of increasing profit margins that are supported by the power of 'Big Alcohol' which promotes the sale of alcohol through sophisticated and well-funded alcohol advertising campaigns. If the alcohol sales were privatized it is inferred that the balance would tip further towards increasing revenues with less concern regarding a social responsibility mandate.

Public health experts are beginning to advocate for alcohol policy that focuses on the entire population. Such universal strategies may include minimum unit pricing and raising the price of beverages that have higher alcohol content (Babor et al. 2010). However, corporate influences are often in sharp opposition to such measures. For example, when Margaret Chan (2013: 1), Director-General of the World Health Organization, addressed a health promotion conference she said,

> "efforts to prevent non-communicable diseases go against the business interests of powerful economic operators. In my view, this is one of the biggest challenges facing health promotion. ... Public health must also contend with Big Food, Big Soda, and Big Alcohol. All of these industries fear regulation, and protect themselves by using the same tactics."

She furthers our understanding of the economic interests of Big Alcohol, Big Soda and Big Food by explaining that "getting people to lead healthy lifestyles and adopt healthy behaviours faces opposition from forces that are not so friendly. Not at all" (Chan, 2013: 1). Big Alcohol provides opposition to public health agendas and other agencies who work to change the culture of alcohol by subtly promoting the notion that alcohol consumption is a private matter (Chan 2013; Haydock, 2014; Mellows, 2013). The irony in this position points to the duplicity in promoting alcohol to the public with little or no recognition of its' harmful consequences.

We can understand the challenges of regulating alcohol in Nova Scotia by reflecting on the influence of neoliberalism as was described in the literature review. Both Haydock (2014) and Mellows (2013) imply that government and community acceptance of the tenets of neoliberalism influences what steps are taken to regulate alcohol. Describing alcohol use

as a public health indicator and profiling rates of heavy drinking in the first Nova Scotia Health Profile (2015), runs counter to these aims.

Interviewee Katie's belief that exposure of children and youth to alcohol advertising and marketing is harmful serves as another acknowledgment of the pervasive presence of alcohol. She worried that early consumption of alcohol by children would reduce their inhibitions, placing them in unsafe situations. As an example, she discussed instances of rape that involve 13-year olds noting alcohol was a huge and under-discussed factor in these cases.

Katie's acknowledgment of the power of advertising and marketing to influence alcohol consumption by youth is supported by a growing amount of research which demonstrates links between exposure to alcohol advertising and the drinking behavior of both boys and girls (Babor et al. 2010; Jernigan, 2011; Parker & McCaffree, 2013). According to Jernigan (2011) the alcohol industry has been successful in finding ways to target youth who are under legal age. Ross et al. (2015: 361) conducted research that examined the cross-sectional association between the population-level exposure of underage drinkers to alcohol brand advertising on twenty popular American television shows and found that these alcohol brands were four times more likely to be consumed by underage youth. They also found that "lower levels of exposure to brand advertising produced the greatest increase in brand consumption prevalence among underage youth, with diminishing effects at higher levels of exposure" (Ross et al. 2015:361). Their work is representative of a growing amount of research that indicates youth are

vulnerable to lower levels of alcohol advertising and the specific content of this advertising.

Katie's comments indicate that community efforts to reduce interpersonal violence need to respond to the harms that result from under-age drinking that can include sexual assaults and other forms of interpersonal violence among young teens.

A growing amount of research explores the negative impacts of early consumption and abuse of alcohol among youth (Greaves & Poole, 2008; Stockwell, 2011; Parker & McCaffree, 2013; Ross et al. 2015). Parker & McCaffree's (2013) research suggests a link between viewing alcohol advertising, alcohol consumption and subsequent sexual assaults. Their detailed critique of alcohol advertising argues that youth who are vulnerable to heavy consumption of alcohol are also susceptible to the implications inherent in many hypersexualized images that are used to sell alcohol. They critique advertising images exist that point to sexual assault as a byproduct of heavy consumption of alcohol (Parker & McCaffree, 2013). Parker & McCaffree (2013:59) claim their research traces specific sexist and demeaning content in alcohol advertising to sexual violence. They write:

> "In this study, the first analysis of its kind (to our knowledge), we have found empirical evidence that the specific content of alcohol advertising in alcohol outlets is related to a type of violence in the surrounding neighborhoods that is consistent with the nature of the advertisements' sexualized content."

While Parker & McCaffree (2013:59) clearly articulate the need for further research to substantiate their research results based on a particular area of the United States, they do note statistical evidence indicating that

youth who are not supposed to be the target of alcohol advertising are influenced by it and in very specific ways.

Parker & McCaffree's (2013) claim that their research may be the first of its kind lends support to Katie's suggestion that the influence of alcohol as a factor in the sexual assault of young teens is under-discussed. If we understand cultural violence as including aspects in the culture that either validate violence or obscure our vision from noticing it, perhaps normalizing a culture of heavy alcohol consumption in Nova Scotia is a form of cultural violence that prevents the development of interventions to protect youth from its' harms (Galtung,1990: 291). These considerations have policy implications for community measures that are created to reduce interpersonal violence; particularly among youth.

Police Official (PO) believed communities need a heightened awareness regarding the exposure to alcohol advertisements by children and youth. He said when different organizations in the community become aware of the role and power of alcohol advertising they may choose not to position advertising in spaces frequented by youth.

Flegel (2013) suggests adolescents need information about the intent of alcohol advertising. He says,

> "They need to be taught that the purpose of advertising is to create a demand where there is no need. When advertising reaches a vulnerable group, such as adolescent girls, they need to understand what it means to be duped by an adult influence that does not have their interest at heart" (Flegel, 2013: 859).

His statements offer sharp critique of government approaches that fail to limit alcohol advertising and media that targets youth. Flegel (2013)

suggests that rather than wait for government regulation and other community measures, youth need to be educated to be armed against these industry tactics. As a pediatrician, Flegel (2013) clearly demonstrates concern for the health of adolescents, however, his advice raises questions about responsibility: Are youth responsible for discerning when they are or are not duped by adult and corporate influences?

As Giroux (2014) describes, we live under the regime of neoliberalism, and this has resulted in transformation of the "social self" to a "disembedded individual". He writes:

> "Disposability has become the new measure of a neoliberal society in which the only value that matters is exchange value. Compassion, social responsibility, and justice are relegated to the dustbin of an older modernity that now is viewed as either quaint or a grim reminder of a socialist past" (Giroux, 2014: 3).

Giroux (2014) defines our current social context as a hyper-market-driven society in which individuals can feel disposable. Within this context, perhaps it is inevitable that comments such as Flegel's (2013) are made to advise teenagers to be cautious about what industries attempt to sell them. In this case, alcohol is no ordinary commodity as a growing amount of research indicates the harms of alcohol-related violence experienced by girls and boys (Greaves & Poole, 2008; Babor et al. 2010; Parker & McCaffree, 2014).

The two dominant models of addiction commonly referred to as the moral and medical models have shaped much of how addiction is understood both by those working in the field and in the public, as noted in the literature

review. These models are limited in how they account for the relationship between alcohol abuse and the impact of cultural and social factors on individuals. According to interview participant Lacey these views are still prevalent and evident in the ways health professionals in emergency rooms respond to patients with substance abuse problems as if “it’s their own problem and they should just stop that behavior”. She believes these views can prevent a deeper understanding of the underlying factors that may contribute to addiction such as experiences of previous trauma. The moral model of addiction fails to incorporate a broader understanding of the causes of addiction and aligns with the neoliberal emphasis on individual responsibility. The main strength of the medical model is its description of addiction as a psychiatric disorder or disease that requires treatment, as this indicates a movement away from penalizing and moral judgment of individuals to the provision of therapeutic treatment programs (Smith & Seymour, 2004; Mate, 2008; Carter et al. 2009). The work of Jernigan (2011) and Ross (et al. 2015) which demonstrated the power of corporations to influence alcohol consumption of youth, points to the need for broad critical analysis of cultural and structural factors often missing in moral and medical models.

Many researchers believe that the appeal of alcohol to youth relates to their need to belong. Alcohol advertisements invite romance, fun and adventure and may be especially appealing to youth and adults who feel alienated and disconnected (Kilbourne, 2000; Jernigan, 2011; Szymanski et al. 2011; Anderson, et al. 2013; Moreno & Whitehill, 2014; Parker & McCaffree, 2014; Ross et al. 2015). Their work infers the need to create

communities in which youth know they are valued and have opportunities to connect with others.

Theme 2: Alcohol Disconnects and Numbs

Interview participant Pat pointed out the alcohol is marketed in a way that indicates it is helpful in coping with stress. Alexander's (2008) dislocation theory of addiction rests on the premise that both substance abuse and a range of addictive behaviors are linked to an individual's experience of stress. His famous rat park experiments have helped demonstrate his claim that alcohol and drugs are not the cause of substance abuse and addiction but rather, attributes of the environment in which people live predispose individuals to the development of these behaviors. Australian cartoonist Stuart McMillen's (2012) *Rat Park* comic strip summarized Alexander's (2008) work with a final question: "What if the difference between not being addicted and being addicted…was the difference between seeing the world as your park….and seeing the world as your cage?" This comic strip depicted rats who lived in a park like setting as protected from developing substance abuse and addictive behaviors while those who lived in environments deprived of relationships and in isolation developed addictions. The dislocation theory of addiction states that "the loss of psychological, social and economic integration into family and culture; a sense of exclusion, isolation and powerlessness" are precursors to substance abuse and addiction (Mate, 2008: 261). As noted previously, a growing number of researchers are linking individuals' social experiences with substance abuse and addiction within environments that promote a sense of dislocation and alienation (Alexander, 2008; Mate, 2008; Lyons 2011 & Ezard, et al. 2011).

Shaffer (2009), a noted expert of addiction at Harvard University, suggests one simple operational definition for understanding addiction includes 'four Cs':

1. Behavior that is motivated by emotions ranging along the Craving to Compulsion spectrum
2. Continued use despite adverse consequences and
3. Loss of Control

These four Cs highlight the importance of understanding the prominence of emotions in addiction behavior. This is not always given such high standing in the literature and does have ramifications for how substance abuse and addiction is perceived. Shaffer (2009) suggests that addiction results from the relationship between a person and the object of their addiction.

The key point here is that while certain drugs are potentially addictive it is the relationship an individual has with the substance that often determines if they will abuse it. For example, most people approach the use of opiates with caution as it is now common knowledge that their addictive potential is high. This is because opiates have the capacity to produce physical dependence and an abstinence syndrome that is referred to as neuroadaptation. Biological psychology defines neuradaptation as the complex biological changes that occur in the brain with repeated exposure to a drug (Adinoff, 2004; Merrer et al. 2009). Signs of neuroadaption can include tolerance, physical dependence and withdrawal symptoms. New molecular biological techniques demonstrate that addictive drugs (such as alcohol, cocaine, nicotine and morphine) induce changes in the brain's

reinforcement system (Adinoff, 2004; Merrer et al. 2009). Therefore, it is believed that these underlying, long-term neuroadaptive changes are associated with the addiction process.

However, not all people who experience neuroadaptation become addicted to a drug. For example, some individuals who are provided opiate pain medication may show signs of withdrawal, an indicator of neuroadaption, but never display addictive behaviour. Shaffer (2009) argues that if neuroadaptation and a subsequent physical dependence were the same as addiction then it would be incorrect to consider pathological gambling as an addictive behaviour. However, pathological gambling is now commonly referred to as an addiction. This points to the fact that addiction and substance abuse are about the relationship an individual has with the object of the addiction. This means that activities and relationships that once had priority become less important and less frequent behaviours become dominant. “Addiction represents an intemperate relationship with an activity that has adverse biological, social, or psychological consequences for the person engaging in these behaviors” (Shaffer, 2009). It is this emotional relationship that is central to understanding the way substance abuse and addiction are discussed in this chapter and is related to interview participant Pat’s comments about alcohol serving as a stress buster. I believe Shaffer’s (2009) suggestion that individuals seek the same rewards from substances that can be found in healthy relationships that may include a feeling of safety, reassurance and a sense of belonging, lends further support for the dislocation theory of addiction.

Ironically, recent focus on biological explanations of addiction has resulted in social and cultural influences becoming more—not less—recognized (Shaffer, 2009). This is because not every individual who presents as genetically predisposed to developing an addiction does so. In contrast, some individuals who are not predisposed genetically to develop an addiction do so. Therefore, the events that happen in people's lives and other social and psychological factors are relevant in determining who does and who does not develop an addiction. Theories of resilience indicate that capacities within the environment to support individuals can provide protective factors that mitigate predispositions to addiction.

Interview participants spoke about the 'numbing' and calming influence of alcohol. One woman shared that her use of alcohol may have contributed to her remaining in an abusive relationship longer then she may without her use of alcohol.

As discussed in the literature review a growing amount of research published over the past two decades confirms that some of victims of violence may have a greater susceptibility to alcohol abuse. This research has established a strong link between experiences of past victimization (including childhood sexual abuse, adult sexual assault and domestic violence) and substance abuse (Najavits, 2002; Dabu 2007; Brown, 2008; Covington, 2008; Mate, 2008; Poole & Greaves, 2012). It is important to point out that not all individuals who have these experiences develop a substance abuse problem or an addiction. As noted in the literature review this topic is complex and many individuals experience protective factors that encourage their resilience. Applying a sex and gendered lens to these issues helps to

illuminate differences that are relevant to creating safety for men and women.

Among girls and women alcohol may be used to help cope with the experience of prior violence as noted in the literature review. Their use of alcohol may contribute to an increased vulnerability to experiences of interpersonal violence. Carr (2011), who interviewed 289 young women in her research on sexual objectification and substance abuse, found that woman who experience high numbers of sexually objectifying experiences are more likely to abuse substances. Szymanski et al. (2011) draw upon objectification theory to postulate that sexual objectification may be a risk factor for substance use and/or abuse in women via exposure to objectifying media, the internalization of media and cultural standards and interestingly, a belief that substance use has a sex appeal. This research highlights the interconnections between objectification and alcohol and can be reframed to suggest that both objectification and substance abuse can be understood as forms of disconnection.

Theme 3: Alcohol: Links to Patriarchy and Violence

As indicated in the Findings chapter, research participants did not describe alcohol as a causal factor in interpersonal violence and believed that to do so would render other factors invisible. Several interview participants believed alcohol was a tool of patriarchy which they described as a cause of violence.

The comments of research participants also implied that interpersonal violence can occur without alcohol as a factor and that a focus on a causal

link between alcohol and violence may help excuse perpetrators from assuming responsibility for their acts of violence. Leonard (2001) who has conducted extensive research on the connections between alcohol and violence in his efforts to encourage environmental interventions, found that the evidence assigns mixed support for the idea that drinking on the part of the man is viewed as an excuse for violence. In fact, Leonard's (2001) research implies that when the man is noted to have been intoxicated court systems often assign harsher penalties. However, if the male perpetrator and female victim were both found to be intoxicated at the time of the offence, Leonard's (2001) research found more blame was assigned to her than when the victim was sober. In these situations, Leonard (2001) suggests the likelihood of arrest for the man may decrease. This suggestion is supported by Felson & Pare's (2007) research that explored if the criminal justice system treats domestic violence and sexual assault offenders leniently. They also found that offenders were more likely to be arrested if they were drinking or using drugs and less likely to be arrested if the victim was drinking. Both Leonard (2001) and Felson & Pare (2007) caution that this is a complex area that requires further research. Nonetheless, Leonard (2001) suggests perhaps the key element to be addressed here is the identification of a potentially pervasive attitudinal barrier that suggests victims who are intoxicated may be more likely blamed by others for the abuse they experience and may also blame themselves. Leonard (2001) suggests there are a series of policy issues that emerge from these considerations that could include formally adopting routine screening for prior experiences of violence for women seeking professional care across a variety of settings.

While interview respondents implicate patriarchal attitudes as contributing to excusing perpetrators of violence who are intoxicated there appears to be little research to support this conclusion. However, the research does suggest that when victims of violence are intoxicated less blame may be attributed to perpetrators. Perhaps the responses of interview respondents are in part based on an assumption that intoxication of perpetrators is used as an excuse for violence to help explain why male perpetrators of sexual assault do not appear to receive stiff sentencing while victims are often heavily scrutinized, as noted in Chapter Three. This discrepancy in perception may indicate a belief in male privilege, a frustration with the broader justice system and a willingness to assume perpetrators are not held to full account for their behavior. Does patriarchy influence this attitudinal bias that is indicative of stigma many women experience who have substance abuse problems? As explored in Chapter Six and further sections in this chapter, perhaps awareness of this attitudinal bias colludes to silence victims of violence.

While these interview participants caution that a focus on alcohol removes a focus on patriarchy as a root cause of violence, I continue to argue that alcohol is inextricably linked to interpersonal violence in Lunenburg County and plays a causal role as indicated by the research conducted by Parker & McCaffree (2014).

Katie's belief that alcohol use by children reduces their inhibitions and can lead to greater peer violence is validated by research literature on this topic (Johnson & Mackay, 2011; Nash Parker & McCaffree, 2014). This

research is slowly growing as it responds to the rapid increase in alcohol consumption by children and youth in the past few decades.

Several research participants indicated they believed alcohol could inflame violence and was often a factor in violent incidents. When speaking about “King Hits” (see Findings chapter) Katie indicated that this form of violence usually occurred when an individual was under the influence of alcohol. While there is very little research on the topic of king hits, Pilgrim et al. (2013) conducted research that examined king hit fatalities in Australia from 2000-2012. They found that 73% involved the use of alcohol and indicated that alcohol intoxication substantially increases the risk of victimization, not just aggressive offending.

More generally, Lindsay (2012) conducted research related to youth, gender and alcohol and found that alcohol-related violence both in public venues and in families was primarily related to particular performances of masculinity. That this violence is linked to performances of masculinity suggests gender-neutral explanations of binge drinkers may miss the point. Lindsay (2012: 241) indicates that gender-neutral terms that include interpersonal violence, “deflect attention away from problematic performances of masculinity in domestic contexts where women are the central victims.” Other researchers have argued that there is a need for education and promotion of diverse and non-violent masculinities, particularly amongst marginalized boys and men (Tomsen, 2008).

The police official (PO) in the town of Bridgewater believes there is a strong correlation between alcohol and violence based in the day-to-day experiences of his police department as described in the Findings chapter.

Interview participant 'PO' indicates that almost all violent episodes that his police respond to within the town of Bridgewater involve alcohol. According to Stockwell (2011:27) police in Nova Scotia estimate that approximately 90% of their work is related to drugs or alcohol. In 2002, the percentage of alcohol-attributed crimes and charges in Nova Scotia (67.6 per cent) was slightly higher than it was for Canada (66.2 per cent) (Stockwell, 2011:27). The costs to Nova Scotia for these alcohol-related crimes are very high; in 2002, the total provincial cost for policing, courts, and corrections amounted to $78.09 million dollars (Stockwell, 2011:27).

As noted in Chapter Three, the social costs of alcohol-related violence, including sexual assaults, have been acknowledged by leading researchers in the field (Graham et al., 2002; Graham & Livingston, 2011; World Health Organization, 2011; Parker & McCaffree 2013). One interview participant expressed his belief that all sexual assaults involved alcohol. Researchers Johnson & MacKay (2011) confirm that most sexual assaults do involve alcohol. They report that alcohol use is so common in sexual violence that it is considered by many researchers to be the date rape drug (Wechsler et al., 2000). According to the Student Nova Scotia report (2013) the majority of the women who were patients at the Avalon Centre's Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program between 2010 and 2011 were women between the ages of 17 to 25 years old and many of these cases involved drugs or alcohol. Scribner et al. (2010) conducted a study of sexual assault on American campuses and estimated that 35-70% of sexual assaults involved alcohol. It is difficult to uncover accurate statistics about the rates of sexual assault

among the general population and this becomes more complex when alcohol is involved because so few of these sexual assaults are reported.

Interview participant Sal shared a story about a young woman who appeared to normalize sexual assault as something she had to endure (see Findings chapter). This young woman's comment is indicative of what some researchers have referred to as a "rape culture" in which experiences of rape are normalized. According to Burnett et al. (2009), a national survey of college women in the United States found that fewer than 5% of sexual offences are reported to law enforcement. In 2004, only 8% of Canadians who indicated they had been sexually assaulted in the past 12 months reported the incident to police (McFayden, 2009).

Consumption of alcohol by the perpetrator of sexual assault and/or the victim increases the likelihood that the sexual assault will not be reported (Burnett et al. 2009; Martell, 2014; Walsh et al. 2014). Victims who were intoxicated at the time of sexual assault are more likely to feel they will be critiqued by friends, family, the justice system and society at large for not taking steps to minimize their risk (Burnett et al. 2009). Victims believe they may be held responsible for putting themselves at risk for sexual assault because of their use of alcohol. Discourses of risk, as previously noted, can render individuals responsible for minimizing their risks (Chan, 2013; Mellows, 2013; Haydock, 2014). This discourse has become an organizing principle in governments informed by neoliberal agendas (Haydock 2014) and influences public sector health and social policy (Scourfield & Welsh, 2002; Lupton, 2005; Gillingham, 2006; Swadener, 2010; Liebenberg, Ungar & Ikeda, 2013). As noted above neoliberal agendas suggest that individuals

who develop problems with alcohol, or, as implied here, experience sexual assault, have personally placed themselves in harm's way (Haydock, 2014). Burnett et al. (2009: 476) write:

> "Taking the precautions to prevent date rape means the individual will also need to take on the responsibility if something were to happen. In other words, if an individual takes responsibility for the preparation to avoid date rape, then, by default, that individual must take the blame if rape occurs."

When the dominant discourse in our culture conceptualizes victims as responsible for sexual assault it is not difficult to understand why reporting rates for sexual assault remain under 10%. Co-cultural theory states that those who experience sexual violence adapt to the dominant culture through a communication process of assimilation that results in silence (Orbe, 1998). Victims of sexual assault remain mute about their experiences often as a form of self-protection because they do not want to put themselves through public scrutiny and/or a court process that can be re-traumatizing (Burnett et al. 2009). As the discourse of risk implies, victims of sexual assault often find themselves in a position where they must answer questions about what led to their victimization. Research participants told Burnett et al. (2009) it was easier to acquiesce to the dominant cultural norms than hold perpetrators of sexual assault accountable. Orbe (1998) describes self-censorship and averting controversy as non-assertive strategies which it appears, victims of sexual assault frequently use to assimilate into the dominant culture.

The study '*Student Safety in Nova Scotia: A Review of Student Union Policies and Practices to Prevent Sexual Violence in Nova Scotia'* states:

> "Today's rape culture, when combined with the alcohol culture found on campus provides the ingredients for the perfect storm. This is a euphemism used to refer to the prevalence of sexual assault on today's campuses. In addition to alcohol being deliberately used as a weapon for sexual assault there is an increasing body of literature that ties today's campus culture of heavy drinking and casual sex to an increased likelihood of acquaintance sexual assault through alcohol's psychological, cognitive and motor effects. While alcohol is not the cause of sexual assault it appears to play a large role" (Martell, 2014:8).

A similar concern was noted in the Municipal Alcohol Project report, '*In Our Words, What Alcohol Use in Bridgewater Looks Like*' (2011), for the Town of Bridgewater, Nova Scotia (Beaton, 2011). This report suggests that heavy drinking among children and teenagers leads to casual sex and that this creates an environment that is potentially harmful.

> "Key informants told us these habits are evident and are having serious consequences. It seems to go hand in hand with the new vision of sexuality...young girls tell us about being involved with several sexual partners at the age of 12 and 13, sometimes more than one in a night and alcohol is normally involved in all that" (Beaton, 2011: 4).

Both Martell (2014) and Beaton (2011) imply that a culture of heavy drinking and casual sex can lead to acquaintance sexual assault as well as contribute to other harms. While they note this area requires further research, there is a small amount of research that explores these connections. For example, Conrad Stoppler (2014) noted that teens in the United States who drink are more likely to engage in sexual activity, have unprotected sex, have sex with a stranger, or be the victim or perpetrator of a sexual assault. This

research that relates to both teens and university students adds to a growing amount of evidence that alcohol is often linked to sexual assault.

The addiction field has been plagued by a long history of stigma. Most Canadians would rather acknowledge having a mental health problem than admit to a problem with alcohol abuse and this is doubly so for women who experience greater stigma (Najavits, 2002; Poole and Greaves, 2008; Dowsett Johnston, 2014). The belief that alcohol abuse is a self-administered problem contributes to judgment and the prevalence of stigma. This stigma has a silencing affect and can create barriers in accessing services. It also creates a culture in which boys and girls and men and women are reluctant to acknowledge problems that may occur because of their use of alcohol.

As Calogero's (2013) research suggests, once the lens of self-objectification is in place, as was described in the previous chapter, women become less likely to oppose the system that constructs and sustains this harmful lens. In Gervais et al. (2014), perhaps the first study to consider the relationship between alcohol use, sexual objectification, and sexual violence, the theme of objectification is further developed. According to this research, heavy drinking was positively associated with college men's sexual objectification of women and sexual violence. The following is a conclusion from this innovative study:

> "Objectification provides one pathway through which alcohol use may contribute to sexual violence, interventions to reduce alcohol-involved sexual assault may be enhanced by including a focus on objectification. Specifically, existing programs aimed at modifying social norms or encouraging bystander intervention could potentially be improved by

> teaching both men and women to identify, confront, and stop objectification" (Gervais et al. 2014: 9).

Given the number of opportunities for women to experience self-objectification in their daily lives, it is troubling that such experiences appear to thwart women's engagement in activism on their own behalf (Calogero, 2013). Calogero (2013) implies that objectification processes contribute to the muting of women's voices relating to challenging aspects of the culture that contribute to sexual assault. Therefore, engagement in activism is disrupted because women are more motivated to support (and thus less likely to challenge) the gender status quo. The real violence in this process of daily and ongoing objectification that women experience is the disconnection from inward and outward identity (ibid). Many women and men who actively work to reduce sexualized violence may disagree with the conclusions made from this research, however it does contribute to our understanding of processes that may serve to maintain a silence regarding these issues.

This chapter has indicated that many factors collude to make discussions related to the harms of alcohol and related violence difficult. Alcohol corporations have been relentless in their development of marketing strategies and products. A culture of alcohol normalizes the consumption of alcohol by teens and adults and contributes to a corresponding taboo and stigma that often prevents acknowledgment of problems with alcohol. If we return to Haydock's (2014: 262) definition of neoliberalism as "a mentality of government that emphasizes the ability of citizens to become autonomous" problems with alcohol can be understood as individual failings that are deeply shameful. Interview participant Lou spoke about how challenging it

could be to look at alcohol policy at the community level because it is seen "as an attack on personal freedom".

However, if alcohol is understood to be linked to interpersonal violence, community peacebuilding frameworks need to overcome stigma and silence to incorporate considerations of alcohol in plans to end interpersonal violence.

Conclusion

This chapter focused specifically on the role of alcohol and violence because alcohol has been identified as the most commonly abused substance in Nova Scotia. This was highlighted in the literature review which noted that almost 30% of the Nova Scotian population identify as heavy drinkers. This chapter analyzed data specific to the intersections of alcohol consumption and violence that supported published research to demonstrate alcohol can be linked to interpersonal violence. Interview data also supported a broad understanding of substance abuse and addiction as socially constructed and not solely the result of individual or medical problems. While personality, genetic influences and medical factors play a role in the development of substance abuse and addiction problems, I argue in this chapter that the social environment and the lived experiences of individuals also plays a significant role (Alexander, 2009; Mate, 2009). I included a significant amount of literature that supports connections between prior experiences of violence and trauma and subsequent substance abuse. This literature supports the need for further development of trauma-informed responses. I clearly articulated that these experiences are not deterministic or predictive of who may develop substance use and/or addiction problems

but do need to be considered in responding to individuals who do. In acknowledging psychosocial complexity, I discussed resiliency theory and provided a social ecological definition that acknowledges the capacity of individuals to locate support and the capacities of communities to provide it. These supports may provide a buffer that serves to prevent the development of a substance abuse and/or addiction problem. Harm reduction, motivational interviewing, strengths-based and trauma-informed approaches, as noted in the literature review all assume individual agency and provide opportunities to minimize the risks and harms of substance abuse. These approaches aim to enhance the capacity of individuals to achieve their goals, even within social contexts that may not always be supportive.

A goal of feminist theory has been to provide education related to oppressive factors that impact individual lives. This process can be empowering as it serves to depersonalize and politicize challenges many individuals face such as poverty and perhaps, as this chapter asserts, sexual assaults and other forms of violence. While agency has always been important to feminist theory, the interlocking constraints of oppressive cultural and structural factors are also understood (Gill, 2008; McRobbie, 2009; McGibbon, 2012; O'Neill, 2015).

A government mentality influenced by neoliberalism runs counter to such education by maintaining a focus on individual responsibilization as highlighted by Alexander (2008) and Haydock (2014). As a result, alienating contexts orchestrated by globalized free market economies are not examined and critiqued (Alexander, 2008; Mate, 2008; Unger and Liebenberg, 2011; Haydock, 2014). When problems with alcohol remain a private and highly

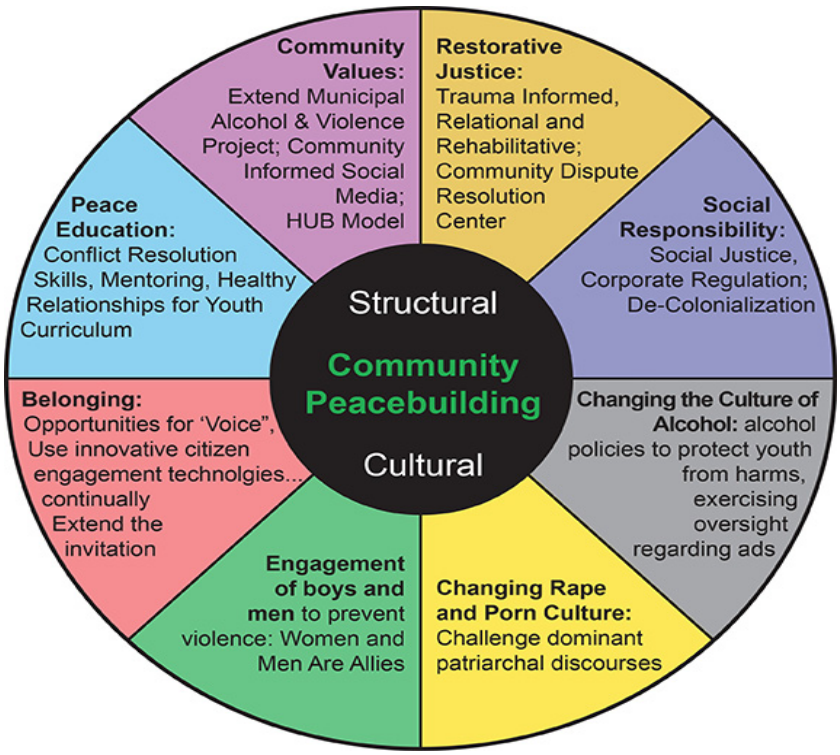
stigmatized issue they are effectively silenced. Likewise, when interpersonal violence is regarded as a private matter it also remains highly stigmatized and is effectively silenced. Co-cultural theory states that different co-cultural groups have different fields of experience, as highlighted in the previous chapter. However, in a context that individualizes problems, both co-cultural groups, i.e. those affected by substance abuse and those affected by violence, are silenced. As a result, socially constructed cultures of alcohol and violence are not effectively addressed as public health issues or social problems. Galtung (2010) noted that conflict and violence as well as the resolution of conflict and peace all shared a relational component. Building peace must be characterized by a focus on mutuality or 'relationality' to others by working to create environments that promote positive relationships (McCold, et al. 2007; Hiroshi, 2007; Galtung, 2010; Downie & Lewellyn, 2011; Dietrich, 2012). These environments promote psychosocial integration; the antidote to both substance abuse and violence (Curle, 1999; Alexander, 2008 & Mate, 2008).

Chapter Eight: Community Peacebuilding

Introduction

This chapter will analyze findings related to what interview participants identified as necessary factors to inform community responses to violence. The chart below presents a visual summary of the themes interview participants identified as helpful measures in developing a community peacebuilding framework to respond to interpersonal violence. While structural and cultural factors are interlocking this chart positions structural factors in the top half of the circle and cultural factors below. These themes will be introduced and discussed throughout this chapter.

Chart : Community Peacebuilding Structure



The seven themes presented in this chapter reflect a complexity and nuance regarding the interplay of agency and structural and cultural factors when considering individual and community responses to interpersonal violence in Lunenburg County. They are titled: 'Voice': Breaking the Silence about Violence; Engaging Boys and Men; The Politics of 'Othering': Demons and Scapegoats; Justice Responses to Interpersonal Violence; Marketing, Media and Advertising: Community Responses; The Municipal Alcohol Project: Local Meets Global and Peace Education: Limitations and Possibilities.

Theme 1: 'Voice': Breaking the Silence about Violence

Four of the women I interviewed acknowledged that they had been past victims of interpersonal violence and wanted to share their story. They expressed a sense of personal agency and desire to use their 'first voice'

experiences to contribute to anti-violence efforts while expressing concern about how their stories would be received in the community. Speaking about past experiences of interpersonal violence was regarded by many interview respondents as a positive individual step that may encourage others to share their experiences and influence systemic change. It is important to recognize that these women may not be representative of all women who have been prior victims of violence as not all prior victims of violence may find it empowering to share their story.

Giddens (1991) suggests progressive social change occurs as a logical and inevitable progression. He writes about the relationship between human agency and social structure. He believes the repetition of acts of individual agents reproduce structures (Giddens & Pierson, 1988). This implies that social structures, which may consist of traditions, institutions, moral codes and established ways of doing things, can be changed when people start to ignore them, replace them or reproduce them differently (ibid).

Gidden's (1991) ideas about the inevitability of progressive social change have been critiqued by feminists who suggest they downplay the history of feminist thought and activism in the reconfiguration of contemporary social life (O'Neill, 2015). O'Neill (2015) references McRobbie's work to support her critique of Gidden's (1991) failure to recognize power dynamics and sexual politics: "There is no trace whatsoever of the battles fought, of the power struggles embarked upon, or of the enduring inequalities which still mark out the relations between men and women" (McRobbie, 2009: 18). While agency has always been important to feminist theory, the constraints of cultural and structural oppressive factors

must also be appreciated as impacting women's choices and ability to influence change (Gill, 2008; McRobbie, 2009; McGibbon, 2012; O'Neill, 2015).

Interview participant Jane felt that the community did not want to hear about experiences of violence. She believed when members of the community became aware of violence they would prefer not to acknowledge it. She believed this avoidant response was also evident in the ways that communities responded to cases of child abuse, "they don't want to touch it". Jane, in agreeing to do the interview, acknowledged that she had experienced interpersonal violence and wanted to speak about her experience. Her comments imply that while she is willing to give 'voice' to her experience, she believes the public may not be ready to listen. There is ambiguity in her wish to speak out, her hopes that it may lead to positive action and her fear that it will not.

Other participants believed there was value in sharing their experience with the Police Department for example, with the aim of helping to improve police responses to victims. Participant A of the Self Advocacy focus group also spoke about sharing her experience as a contribution towards defining the positive change that is needed. In referring to these efforts to reduce domestic violence as a 'cause', she demonstrates she was inspired to join with others who also shared a similar commitment. Clearly, these four women wanted to contribute in some way to ending the type of interpersonal violence they had experienced. All four appeared to believe that sharing their experiences would help lift the silence surrounding this issue and each expressed a tentative hope that this might make a difference or a change

within larger cultural and structural systems. In doing so, they shared their assumption that interpersonal violence remains a significant issue in Lunenburg County, an issue the public is perhaps reluctant to explore. This is corroborated by literature that notes interpersonal violence remains a significant issue in Lunenburg County and by the United Nations and the World Health Organization, which note that the global stigma attached to this issue contributes to its silencing (United Nations Populations Fund, 2005; Perreault & Brennan, 2010; World Health Organization, 2010). The willingness of these women to address this issue within their community can be understood as acts of resistance that speak truth to power (Kennedy, 2000). In writing about the power of putting words to experiences of violence, Lederach & Lederach (2010: 184) state:

> "To touch voice is to locate the power to reclaim ownership of self, body and expression. Here we find another metaphor: VOICE IS POWER. …The body that holds the violence now rumbles with the vibration and echo that touches deep within yet bounces out to join others".

Giving voice to experiences of violence is seen as a step towards decreasing the isolation that often accompanies such events (as discussed in Chapter Three). While the metaphor 'voice is power' implies influence, many interview participants questioned to what degree.

Angela Lederach notes that in her final year of study as a student at the University of Notre Dame in the United States, six of her friends suffered sexual violence and that listening to The Vagina Monologues "was the first time [she] felt the power to release the stories of my friends and co-workers that had been held so long in bitter secrecy". The Vagina Monologues, a play compiled by Eve Ensler, "re-creates a set of real stories from women across

the world, a mini-truth commission portrayed on stage; women giving voice to their experiences" (Lederach & Lederach, 2010: 184). The Vagina Monologues were held in Nova Scotia and served to help break the silence about violence against women by giving voice to the experiences of local women (www.VDay. Org, 2014).

Breaking the silence regarding interpersonal violence, and specifically violence against women, is a challenge to the social order that preserves a culture of silence. When violence is hidden and silenced, it can remain an individual problem that is burdened with stigma. Once women speak out and join in collective action, they are more able to leverage power.

Interviewee Davey also noted stigma as a factor that contributed to silencing incidents of violence and wondered if breaking this silence would create an attitudinal shift regarding our perceptions of victims and influence a better response.

It is interesting that Davey, male and a former university professor and medical doctor who conducted sexual assault examinations, also acknowledges a question about the value of giving 'voice' to violence. Because he is male and highly educated, he may be perceived as privileged within Lunenburg County, but he also appears tentative in his belief that attitudinal and/or systemic change will occur as more people talk about interpersonal violence. Could it be as a result of his medical examiner role of sexual assault victims, his consciousness of the issue increased and his empathy for victims was strengthened? His question demonstrates both his understanding of the current social order and cultural milieu that tends to

shame victims as well as his uncertainty regarding whether giving voice to such practices would lead to change.

Bourgois (2004) writes, “Rape runs rampant around us in a terrifying conspiracy of silence. It becomes a public secret that enforces an important dimension of the oppression of women in everyday life” (Bourgois, 2004:344; qtd in Lederach and Lederach, 2010). The notion that public secrets enforce women’s oppression presents a challenge to communities to critically reflect on the ways in which safe and welcoming spaces are created for women to tell their stories and become change agents engaged in collective action.

Interviewee Jim also acknowledged the secrecy that shrouds experiences of violence. He recommends individuals who learn about a person experiencing interpersonal violence share this information with a person “in a position of responsibility”. Here, Jim is addressing the fact that often victims of violence experience re-victimization and this cycle can occur more readily when the violence remains unspoken (Najavits, 2002). While giving voice to experiences of interpersonal violence can be the first step in interrupting a cycle of violence, it can still require a leap in faith to believe you will not be blamed for the violence you have experienced or be told to keep it to yourself.

In my work as a clinical therapist in addiction and mental health settings in Nova Scotia, I have been at times overwhelmed by the number of stories I have heard from youth, women and men who have recounted, sometimes haltingly and in pieces, their experiences of having been physically and sexually abused. In many ways, their stories became a public secret in my office. I questioned for many years the value of these stories beyond

facilitating individual healing and wondered what steps my workplace could take to politicize these issues in attempts to prevent interpersonal violence from happening in the first place. I wrestled with concepts of agency, hoping that in my attempts to raise issues collective action might result, while also facing many disappointments when it did not. For example, I believed that recording the number of people entering mental health and addiction settings who had experienced either childhood and/or adult abuse could help inform a political response, thereby linking the personal with the political. Within provincial systems of governance, I encountered a bureaucracy that often prioritized agendas that were politically expedient. If, as a professional working in a health care system, I experienced little opportunity to politicize responses to violence, I could only, at that time, admire the strength and courage of men and women who had direct experiences of violence and wanted to challenge structures that collude to silence them.

Interview participant Elena shared her learning in a workshop she had attended confirmed that speaking about experiences of violence helps survivors feel less anxiety. As noted in Chapter Six, it is possible that Elena's comments and the workshop she referenced reflect an understanding that women's voices are 'muted' in Lunenburg County, particularly when speaking about violence. Elena acknowledged that this workshop affected her personally in terms of recognizing that giving voice to experiences of violence in a non-violent and 'peaceful way' could help reduce conflict within herself as well as potentially benefit others.

This fact is noted by an American internet-based organization called Just Tell.org that aims to empower youth to speak out about sexual abuse.

The organization describes their mission as preventing children from having "to bear the scars of unrevealed and repeated abuse, the consequences of which have been repeatedly shown to include higher-than-average rates of drug and alcohol abuse, self-destructive behaviors, guilt and shame" (JustTell, 2010). These themes have also been discussed in Chapter Three.

Through their willingness to share stories of victimization, the four women noted above, highlight their resistance to violence and assert their personal agency even while questioning whether their stories will impact the wider systemic structural and cultural factors that sustain interpersonal violence (Richardson & Wade, 2008; McCarthy, 2010).

Participant A of the Gather the Men focus group also spoke, from his standpoint as a high school teacher, about the importance of giving voice to experiences of violence as a step to reduce shame. He believed stories were powerful and could influence change. While acknowledging that silence and shame surrounds the issue, participant A is also indicating that he had his students' attention when discussing it and that perhaps there exists among high school students a willingness to have conversations about the topic of interpersonal violence with a male teacher.

Participant C of the Youth and Schools focus group also believed having discussions with youth about violence could make a difference. This participant noted that Social Services may be reluctant to challenge assumptions and ideas. This comment highlights barriers to systemic change, even in agencies mandated to provide services to the community. Much of the data presented in this section indicates an underlying belief that the deep structural and cultural changes that are necessary to end

interpersonal violence will not be easy to achieve. However, as the following comments continue to indicate, there was consensus among the data that stories of interpersonal violence are valuable and may serve to raise awareness of the issue, awareness that could potentially lead to collective action.

Participant D of the Youth and Schools focus group discussed the personal benefits of having “tricky conversations” about experiences of violence. ‘Tricky conversations’ implies that speaking about interpersonal violence is fraught with challenges and complexities. Acknowledgment of these challenges may have in part contributed to the development of the *Neighbors, Friends and Families* program, which is a public education campaign to raise awareness of the signs of abuse so that those close to an at-risk individual can help (Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children, 2015). Interview participant Pat suggested that resources such as this program could teach people how to hold conversations about violence and provide direction about the best response.

Interview participant Lara also spoke about the importance of talking about violence to increase awareness. She believed that if more discussions were held that addressed this issue it would increase the likelihood that people would report it, thereby contributing to reducing violence. So, while speaking about violence may involve ‘tricky conversations’ for Lara, it is a necessary component of political action. She suggests that greater awareness about violence may make it harder to ignore. However, awareness campaigns alone have not normally been effective in reducing complex behaviors such as intimate-partner violence and sexual violence,

although they can reach large numbers of people (Harvey, et al. 2012). Awareness campaigns that target behavior change should be planned in conjunction with other strategies for primary prevention of intimate-partner violence and sexual violence (Harvey, et al. 2007). As noted in Chapter Three, Wells, et al. (2012) describe a range of components that are believed to be necessary to reduce interpersonal violence in communities around the world. These include educational programs and teaching healthy relationship skills. As Harvey, et al. (2007: 30) note, it may also include the creation of "enabling social environments including gender-equitable and non-violent social norms, and responsive and protective community institutions" to promote gender equality and strengthen protective factors at the societal level.

Ten interview participants were united in their belief that experiences of violence must not be silenced and that giving voice to these experiences can render visible what is often hidden. All women interviewed who acknowledged they had been prior victims of violence wanted to use this experience to help inform a better response. Interview participant A of the Self Advocacy Focus group indicated her belief that collective action involved identifying with a group. This participant referred to the '*Idle No More*' social movement as asking for "recognition and accountability". The '*Idle No More'* social movement originated in Canada and calls on all people to join in a peaceful revolution that honours Indigenous sovereignty and protects the land and water (http://www.idlenomore.ca). This movement grew to include many people, in Canada and in other parts of the world, and stands as an example of collective action and protest. Participant A appears to be

advocating for collective accountability and collective response. Giving voice to experiences of violence serves a dual role that includes an individual therapeutic function and a collective awareness-raising that may lead to collective community action. According to McCauley (2013), naming experiences of violence and the disconnection that saturates many social structures, and thus impacts personal lives, is the first step toward transformation. As participants A, B and C of the women's self-advocacy group stated, giving voice to their experiences of violence was their way of participating both individually and collectively in efforts towards positive change. Their decision to share stories of victimization asserts their personal agency and contributes to reducing stigma by breaking the silence about violence even while questioning whether it will result in systemic and cultural change (Richardson & Wade, 2008; McCarthy, 2010). The following sections include analysis of data that relate to further aspects of community peacebuilding.

Theme 2: Engaging Boys and Men

Many interview participants noted the importance of engaging boys and men to work as allies alongside women and girls to help end interpersonal violence in Lunenburg County. Interview participant Graham stated that he wanted to engage men in conversations to end violence against women and girls that could include discussing ingrained gendered stereotypes. *The Report of the Task Force on Misogyny, Sexism and Homophobia in Dalhousie University Faculty of Dentistry* (2015) acknowledges systemic and cultural factors influenced social media-posting behaviour of male Dalhousie

University (Halifax, Nova Scotia) dentistry students. This report described the societal influences as follows:

> "What is clear is that many young men today appear to be trying to measure up to rigid expectations of masculinity, which require posturing as aggressive competitors for heterosexual access to female bodies, using homophobic slurs, and objectifying and demeaning women. …Relations between the sexes have increasingly been depicted as about domination and control" (Backhouse et al. 2015).

Graham believed steps needed to be taken to help boys and men to feel safe to engage in these challenging conversations because the promotion of stereotypes influence boys and men in ways that could make it challenging for them to discuss and critique these norms.

In Lunenburg County, the top three industries in decline between 2006 and 2011 (as measured by labour force) were: agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting by 35.4%; manufacturing by 22.3%; and construction by 15.0%, with the result that agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting moved out of the top five industries (Lunenburg County's Vital Signs, 2013). Perhaps both the decline in these industries and their historical prominence within the community contribute to rigid gender stereotypes that may make it challenging to find safe places for men to discuss relationship concerns and issues related to interpersonal violence. The slow decline of traditional employment opportunities that were largely male dominated may be unsettling to men who historically relied on these roles for their income and way of life.

Lunenburg County's population is largely rural and it is possible, according to Oughton (2007), that rurality contributes to the promotion of more traditional gender roles. These norms may create an environment in which intimate partner violence could be viewed as a private matter (Basile & Black, 2011). Pease (2010) concludes that there is persuasive evidence that men's violence against women is a more significant problem in rural communities and less likelihood of it being reported. This indicates a heightened need to engage in discussions related to gender norms and interpersonal violence in areas that are more rural and isolated.

Graham suggested that bringing men together to discuss their role as fathers and partners and leaders in the community was the only way to reduce interpersonal violence. This suggestion is open to a variety of interpretations. First, it seems to imply that little progress has been made and perhaps that is because men and boys have not been sufficiently engaged. Second, this statement undervalues the significant history of work on this issue by women. Are Graham's perceptions the result of a long history of patriarchy, which includes men holding the balance of power and community leadership positions within Lunenburg County (as was pointed out in Chapter Two). Or might his statement recognize that men need to take responsibility for their acts of violence against women and that only they can do this? When accepting such responsibility, Graham is advocating a relational approach in terms of arguing that men need to reflect on their roles as 'dad's', 'partners' and community 'leaders'. Perhaps, Graham's statement indicates an appreciation for the ways in which structural and cultural factors are experienced by boys and men in Lunenburg County, ways that result in

less engagement in caregiving roles such as parenting as noted in Chapter Two (Nova Scotia Child Poverty Report Card, 2007). I argue that this statement can be understood as patriarchal authority, indicating a belief that significant change hinges on men's engagement, while at the same time recognizing the importance of their engagement in this issue. However, somewhat in contradiction to this position, Graham implies later in our conversation that this issue needs to go beyond gendered binaries and become a societal issue, a people's issue and a community issue in which both men and women have influence. While his first statement implies attention to gender and power relations, his admonition to move beyond gendered binaries to view interpersonal violence as a people's issue does the opposite and points to a debate that currently rages within the anti-violence field. De-gendering interpersonal violence is viewed by many as a tactic to avoid discussions of feminism and to obscure men's violence while placing the burden of responsibility on women (Berns, 2001; O'Neill, 2015). This perspective, which Berns (2001) refers to as patriarchal resistance, holds women responsible as abusers, victims, and advocates. Further, she writes, "By de-gendering the problem and gendering the blame, this perspective undermines any attempt to situate domestic violence within a patriarchal explanation. The roles of gender and power are ignored" (Berns, 2001: 278; Nixon & Tutty, 2010). The result is a political countermovement to the feminist construction of domestic violence that normalizes violence as something which men and women commit to an equal degree. It diverts attention from men's responsibility and the cultural and structural factors that foster violence and distorts descriptions of women's violence such that it is

perceived as being as harmful as men's violence, as was noted in Chapter Three (Berns, 2001; O'Neill, 2015).

Many interview participants stressed the importance of men taking responsibility for violence against women. For example, Gene also stated that it was important for men to acknowledge their male privilege and work as allies with women. Dienes (2014), coordinator of a project funded by the Status of Women Canada to engage men and boys to end violence against women in girls in rural Nova Scotia, has conducted several workshops in Lunenburg County to address male privilege. He suggests this work must involve the willingness of men to relinquish their role of expert and to learn from and be accountable to women's organizations. Further, Dienes (2014) suggests that this involves learning from the decades of experience of women's organizations in addressing gender issues.

Sal also discussed the importance of working with men to help them explore their attitudes and beliefs and to educate boys early in life to develop a healthy self-image and their place in society. Sal uses the term 'we have to' three times in referring to women's efforts to work with boys and men. Similarly, Gene also stated, "We have to get the men … to deal with their privilege and not be defensive." Both statements imply an assumption of patriarchal resistance to such work that is noted above. Can Sal and Gene relinquish their feelings of responsibility to educate boys and men and be confident that men will fill these roles?

Participant E of the Gather the Men focus group suggested that women feel hurt by men and this influences the manner of their communication. He had attended an event hosted by the Be the Peace project, referred to as

‘Gather the People’, which aimed to facilitate conversations between men and women regarding violence against women. Participant E said the highlight of this event for him was learning about the amount of hurt expressed by the women towards the men who had come together to discuss these issues. This is evidence that hosting such events may result in conversations that are conflictual and highlight the need for social healing. If such conversations were framed within a peacebuilding and conflict resolution lens, conflict could be viewed as inevitable and part of the healing process that leads to transformation (Ramsbotham, et al. 2011).

The literature suggests that helping men to deal with their privilege, resist patriarchy and work toward exploring their attitudes and beliefs may be more effective if first led by men who are familiar with the culture and local issues that confront boys and men of Lunenburg County (Katz, 2006; Porter, 2006). As described by Pat, life in geographically rural areas may shape the culture and local issues. She suggests that isolation in Lunenburg County may contribute to a vulnerability to interpersonal violence. However, Peace (2010) argues that while socio-cultural aspects of rural areas generate stronger enforcement of gender roles that perpetuate gender inequality, as described above, there is evidence that new rural restructuring is challenging dominant forms of masculinity and influencing the restructuring of masculinities in rural Australia. In Lunenburg, the 2013 Vital Signs Report indicates that the top three growth industries for the period of 2006-2011 are utilities, which grew by 43.8%; educational services, which grew by 43.3%; and finance and insurance, which grew by 28.1% (Lunenburg County Vital Signs, 2013). It is possible that growth in these industries, coupled with

decreases in agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and manufacturing and construction, may influence the structuring of masculinities in Lunenburg County.

Pat also pointed to the need to engage boys. She believes that communities needed to have more boys and men involved in what she referred to as “the gender transformative work” that would help boys be educated in ways that would help them intervene to prevent interpersonal violence.

Sofie also suggested that the “role masculinity plays in our society” prescribes acceptable behavior and communication styles that may constrain boy’s and men’s ability to express a wide range of emotions and characteristics (as addressed in Chapter Six) (Pollack, 1998; Shepard & Rabinowitz, 2013). As noted in Chapter Three, there are many forms of masculinities, each with internal complexities and contradictions that evolve over time (Connell, 2005). There are now several academic research journals that address the evolution of knowledge regarding masculinities and, while acknowledging that this is a new field of research, they interrogate hegemonic definitions of masculinity (which Sofie references above) that often depict men as aggressive and insensitive.

Perhaps Sofie is referencing the ways in which masculinity is sometimes portrayed in mainstream media. As noted by Porter (2006) dominant scripts of masculinity portrayed on mainstream media can define what he refers to as a “man box”. This box contains narrowly scripted prescriptions of what it means to be a man and according to Porter (2006) first on the list is the directive to not cry openly or express emotions, with the

exception of anger. Research literature affirms the suggestion that boys feel limited and pressured by such scripts (Vandello & Cohen, 2003; Katz, 2006; Minerson et al. 2011). As noted above, this pressure may be felt more strongly in rural contexts like Lunenburg County in which traditional gendered scripts can remain quite entrenched (Dienes, 2014).

Throughout this thesis I have argued that ending interpersonal violence and specifically violence against women will involve challenging entrenched cultural and structural factors that are upheld by patriarchal, heteronormative and colonial systems that perpetuate gendered stereotypes and are bolstered by gender inequity. Patriarchal privilege, embedded in neoliberal capitalism, functions to preserve the status quo and therefore challenges to this system may result in new expressions of patriarchal power (Bern, 2001; Nixon & Tutty, 2010). Challenges to these systems may be met with resistance and openness to such exploration may be painful if more spaces are provided to speak of past and current hurt, inequity and lost opportunities (Bern, 2001; Nixon & Tutty, 2010). It is also possible to imagine such spaces may serve to decrease pain and resistance. For example, a survey conducted by the White Ribbon Campaign found that 75% of Canadian men feel that it is very important to speak out on issues of violence against women and 66% believed they could personally be doing more (Minerson et al. 2011). This report acknowledges that most men appear to be caught between recognizing the importance of speaking out and an unwillingness or perceived lack of skills to intervene should the issue of violence against women arise (ibid). Perhaps more men would be engaged to work on this issue if they knew the steps they could take.

While recognizing the structural and cultural factors (see Chapters Six and Seven) that create immense pressure for boys and men in Lunenburg County to conform to gender stereotypes, the data recommends a process of unpacking these messages to empower boys to oppose violence. I refer to these steps as a part of critical peace theory that is aligned with the emancipatory thrust of this research. The data analysis and literature presented in the remaining five themes continues to present measures identified by research participants as helpful to inform community responses to interpersonal violence.

Theme 3: The Politics of 'Othering': Demons and Scapegoats

Several respondents critiqued cultural and structural factors, including the justice system, that 'othered' perpetrators of violence to differentiate and distance them from 'mainstream' community members. For example, in response to an interview question that explored if the knowledge that many male perpetrators of violence have been victims of violence should influence our response to them, participant F of the Gather the Men focus group, acknowledged he had been abused by a representative of the clergy in his youth. His responses detailed in the Findings chapter indicate he had carefully considered how his abuser should be treated. He said this man did not come from another planet but was a member of our society, "part of us", who needed to be treated with compassion, even if he did not show remorse. This interview participant shared profound and challenging statements that indicated his belief that the perpetration of violence reflected a flawed society. In 'othering' individual perpetrators of violence we miss this point.

Participant F's statement, like those of the women in the Self-Advocacy Focus group, suggests a resistance to violence and sense of personal agency that transcends notions of victimhood as passive, fragile and unforgiving (Richardson & Wade, 2008; McCarthy, 2010). A component of participant F's self-agency is his recognition that he is also a participant in a society that enables such acts of violence. As such, his critical self-reflection can be described as an element of a critical peace approach that concludes 'we' have a responsibility to treat perpetrators of violence with compassion because they are a member of the community. Therefore, men's acts of violence implicate the wider community to respond in ways that acknowledges perpetrators of violence belong and are part of the community or a part of 'us'. Such collective notions of responsibility are alien to cultures influenced by concepts of neoliberalism that promote individualism and can result in a transformation of the "social self" to a "disembedded individual" (Giroux, 2014). Participant F described himself as an art teacher who asked students his students to "go to the core of who they are". In advocating this critical self-reflection he demonstrates his faith in a creative process that will yield a peaceful response.

I recognized a consistent theme in the data that related to the importance of a sense of belonging to psychological well-being. This is corroborated by literature noted in Chapter Three that links psycho-social integration, which is essential to healthy human development, with a sense of belonging (Alexander, 2008).

Alexander (2008) links the spread of globalization with a growth in dislocation, alienation, violence and increased substance abuse and

addiction, as discussed in the Literature Review and in Chapter Seven. Dislocation, he notes, is caused by the globalization of a "free-market society" which subordinates the needs of people to the imperatives of markets and the economy. Alexander (2010) believes dislocation threatens to become universal, as a global free-market society undermines ever more aspects of social and cultural life everywhere.

While participant F, as noted above, argues that perpetrators of violence are a part of a wider community and should not be regarded as separate from it, Alexander (2010) argues that we are all susceptible to feeling alienated. If we are all impacted by the power of globalized structures that create a sense of competition and disconnection and prioritize the responsibility of the individual to succeed in life, how can communities encourage a sense of collective responsibility that welcomes ‘the other’?

Interview participant E of the Gather the Men’s focus group commented on a national televised interview the police chief had given regarding the shooting of RCMP officers in New Brunswick. He said the police chief had referred to the young man who shot the police officers as ‘vermin’ and thereby demonized him. Participant E saw this person as a vulnerable individual and noted that assigning individual blame for these shootings avoided looking at the influence of larger structural and cultural factors.

Similarly, when discussing societal responses to perpetrators of violence, interview participant Sofie said men who commit violence should not be perceived as monsters and require a more humanizing response than what she currently observes.

The responses of three interview participants noted above indicate that they do not believe that perpetrators of violence should be viewed as ‘demons’, ‘from mars’, as ‘vermin’ or as ‘monsters’; rather their actions should be understood as occurring within a complex system that is influential in shaping their ‘field of experience’ and subsequent choices and behavior (Orbe, 1998).

Interview participant Graham also shared his view that those who perpetrate violence are not so different from us. He too referred to the shooting of the RCMP officers in New Brunswick and the ways in which the perpetrator of the shooting was seen “as different from us”. Graham’s comments indicate empathy and compassion for individuals who have perpetrated violence that may be based on his previous work with men who have perpetrated violence against women. He suggests that while ‘we’ want perpetrators of violence to be unlike ‘us’, they are not. In his objection to this binary, Graham is articulating an idea that community citizens are all a part of a collective in which people who perpetuate violence are also a part.

When considering the ways in which the criminal justice system responds to perpetrators of violence, many interviewees expressed comments that were like Graham’s noted above. These comments suggest dissatisfaction with current criminal justice practices and a belief that these practices were not helpful in encouraging a sense of accountability for violent behavior or in aiding in rehabilitation. They also felt that the current criminal justice system failed to acknowledge the influence of systemic cultural and structural factors that contributed to violence.

However, several interviewees also spoke about the positive role of the correctional system and shared their belief that serious offenders needed to be imprisoned. Within these responses there existed some tension, debate and nuanced differences of opinion regarding the role of restorative approaches and correctional facilities in responding to perpetrators of violence that is explored in the following section.

Theme 4: Justice Responses to Interpersonal Violence: Punitive or Restorative

Many participants shared thoughts and critiques regarding the criminal justice system in Canada. Several respondents felt that relatively few individuals who perpetrate interpersonal violence need to be removed from society while several others felt that having prison sentences for serious offences was essential. For example, interview respondent Mike believed dangerous offenders needed to be imprisoned. Individual interview respondent Louise took this one step further and shared her belief that correctional facilities should have programs designed specifically to work with men who abused women. While several of those interviewed believed that prisons were essential in removing dangerous people from our communities, they also expressed a belief that prisons should be rehabilitative. While the scope of this thesis does not permit a detailed exploration of prison systems, the respondents who were strongest in their critique of jails shared their belief that imprisonment did not help perpetrators of violence make positive changes in their behavior to help them become less violent.

In response to the interview question that explored if our responses to men who commit violence should be different if we knew they had been prior

victims of violence, respondent C of the Gather the Men focus group imagined what it would be like to be in that position. He said he would like to be treated with compassion and helped to make changes. He did not believe that a stay in jail would be helpful. Individual interviewee Jim also believed the justice system had to become more responsive to the needs of men and that serving a sentence in jail was not the solution. Interviewee Mike said it was easy to send men to prison and more difficult to ask what we could do as a society to provide these men with better tools.

Interviewee E (female) of the Youth and Schools focus group also said that she believed time in jail for these men provided an escape from looking at larger societal issues. When reflecting on the influence of our culture she clearly believed that individuals grow up in a violent society that responds to violence with more violence. She described the criminal justice system as violent and a reflection of a larger violent system. Perhaps this system is informed by a belief that adults cannot make substantial changes in their behavior.

Reisel (2014) states that society in general has been persuaded that human nature cannot change. Reisel (2014) points out that 70% of prisoners reoffend and asks if it wouldn't be better to provide environments that focused on the rehabilitation of prisoners. The data suggests a belief that perpetrators of violence can make positive change but, by serving prison or community sentences that do not offer specific treatment programs, perpetrators are often not sufficiently assisted in doing so.

Interview participant Gene critiqued the justice system from the standpoint of women who had been victims of violence. She believed that

legal systems needed to significantly change to become more responsive to the needs of women and this position is substantiated by a large amount of literature (Clute, 2010; Singer, 2012). Gene advocates for systemic, cultural and structural change while recognizing there are limitations within a patriarchal state which influence the justice system at every level. Gene's arguments appear to indicate her sustained personal and academic interest in this topic that results in a broad systemic critique of the legal system. This differed from the respondents who were members of the Women's Self Advocacy group who chose to focus on specific services that impacted responses at a local level, such as police services. A grassroots radical community peacebuilding approach implies a belief that change can begin locally, a belief that is affirmed by social innovation researchers who suggest the world is changed by local innovative responses to social problems that can expand to include larger numbers of communities (Westley, et al. 2006).

As noted in Chapter Three, a growing amount of research emphasizes the relational aspects of restorative approaches that promote connection to others (McGold et al. 2007; Graham, 2008; Llewellyn, 2011). Several respondents spoke about restorative justice approaches as providing the potential for rehabilitation of perpetrators of violence and perhaps restoration of relationships for those who choose to remain in relationships with perpetrators of violence. As noted earlier in this thesis, the province of Nova Scotia is considered a leader in the use of restorative approaches among youth who commit offences, but such approaches have not been applied to adult interpersonal violence situations (Llewellyn, 2011). Restorative approaches have been used extensively in school settings across the

province with the result that many parents and other community members have become familiar with key concepts of these approaches.

Interview participant Graham shared his belief that these approaches could be useful in some cases of domestic violence. Graham's position, informed by five years of work within a treatment program for male perpetrators of violence, is grounded in front-line experience with this issue. However, as noted in the Literature Review, the provincial moratorium on applying restorative approaches to domestic violence cases cautions that the safety of women and children must remain paramount. Therefore, the implementation of restorative practices in domestic violence cases must not be conducted in a generic manner but with specific measures to prioritize and guarantee women's safety (Rubin 2003; Stubbs, 2007). While Graham and other participants quoted below express their favor for restorative approaches, implementation of such measures would need to very carefully address safety concerns.

Interview participant Alexa indicated that for people who choose to remain in a relationship where violence has occurred it was helpful to have conversations about what went wrong. As noted in the literature many couples who experience violence in their relationships do choose to remain together. Some researchers within the justice field suggest that restorative processes could offer an opportunity to learn non-violent communication skills and conflict resolution that would help couples learn healthy relationship skills (Gabbay, 2005; Clute, 2010; Llewellyn, 2010; DeFreitas, 2013).

Participants C and E of the Youth and Schools focus group were in favor of introducing restorative justice approaches for adults, while indicating their awareness that a moratorium had been in place in Nova Scotia since the early 1990s on the use of these approaches in domestic violence and sexual assault cases. A few individuals felt these approaches could be piloted with less significant cases of violence, while one participant suggested they could be used in more severe cases, even in cases of sexual assault.

As noted in the Literature Review, restorative justice, restorative approaches, restorative practices and restorative theory have been collectively defined as a social healing paradigm, not merely a program (McCold, 2006). It is perhaps this promise that triggers such enthusiastic endorsement by many of those interviewed in this research.

However, as noted above and in Chapter Three, such approaches are justifiably regarded with caution due to concerns raised by women activists and feminist researchers involved in the anti-violence movement that are related to the need to prioritize women's safety needs (Stubbs, 2007; Rubin, 2003). While Stubbs (2007) acknowledges that there are potential benefits of restorative justice approaches, she cautions that they have rarely been explored in asymmetrical forms of social relations. Both Stubbs (2007) and Coker (2005) argue that restorative approaches may need to be adapted to prioritize women's safety over the rehabilitation of perpetrators of violence but agree there could be an expanded role for restorative approaches in response to interpersonal violence.

I argue that prioritizing women's safety and implementing restorative approaches in interpersonal violence situations should not be conducted by volunteers as it requires committed and highly skilled professionals to assess safety concerns and facilitate skill-based conferences. For example, these skills include the recognition within restorative approaches of the shame that can be experienced both by the victim and perpetrator of violence, as well as by other family and community members.

The role of shame, described by Braithwaite (1989) as central to restorative practices, can be controversial. As noted in Chapter Six, the data indicates that most respondents view shame as negative and unhelpful. However, as described by Retzinger and Scheff (2000), shame can play a positive role within restorative approaches that helps perpetrators appreciate the harm caused by their actions. They caution that this role must be delicately balanced to evoke enough shame to bring home the seriousness of the offence but not exceed the amount that may result in the humiliation and hardening of perpetrators. These researchers suggest that too much shame can be as destructive as too little (ibid). They caution that, within restorative practices, humiliation makes it difficult for the offender to accept responsibility for the harm that has been done and thereby help remove shame from the victim (Retzinger and Scheff, 2000). I agree with Brown (2012) that shame can have a detrimental impact, particularly if this feeling persists in one's life for a lengthy duration.

The role of shame in the Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (DAIP) has been critiqued. This model, as noted in the Literature Review, was developed in 1980 and has gained international prominence as a

coordinated community response to interpersonal violence (Shepard & Pence, 1999). However, DAIP has been critiqued for its focus on shaming perpetrators of violence in a manner that is not helpful to their engagement in the process of assuming responsibility for their violence (Augusta Scott, 2010).

Several interview respondents believed that the creation of a Community Dispute Resolution Center (CDRC) could assist in resolving disputes and conflicts and teach conflict resolution skills that were noted to be lacking in the community.

Interview respondents Graham, Lara and Kath expressed their support for a Community Dispute Resolution Center that is organized and run by community members, while also expressing concern about how it would be sustainably funded and supported within the community.

This section highlighted tension within the data regarding the ways in which communities should respond to perpetrators of violence. Several participants believed it was necessary to remove dangerous offenders from the community and that jails could provide this function. Others felt that jails could offer greater possibilities for rehabilitation and specific programming. A significant number of participants championed the implementation of restorative practices in the community as an alternative to incarceration. As noted previously, this recommendation reflect familiarity with these approaches due to their pervasive use among youth and in schools in Nova Scotia. The current moratorium on implementing these approaches within Nova Scotia for domestic violence related to issues of power and safety concerns. While jails may help community members feel safer by removing

violent offenders, the promise of restorative justice is integrative and relational. The choice of punitive or restorative responses to perpetrators of violence may hinge on a community's perception of perpetrators' capacity for change and ability to learn new skills.

Theme 5: Marketing, Media and Advertising: Community Responses

When facing the magnitude and power of globalized marketing and social media, many interview participants questioned their ability to influence social change at the community level. A theme emerged when analyzing the data that explored questions related to the responsibility and/or ability of communities to regulate these influences that contribute to defining our 'field of experience' within a mass-mediated, capitalist society (Orbe, 1998; Kilbourne, 2000; Katz, 2006; Levin & Kilbourne, 2009). As noted previously, the Report of the Task Force on Misogyny, Sexism and Homophobia in Dalhousie University Faculty of Dentistry (2015: 43) described a 'seismic' shift towards more racist and sexist images within the last two decades in Canada that are primarily consumed by boys between the ages of 12 and 17. While many in the public of Nova Scotia and elsewhere felt that individual students within the Dentistry school should be expelled for their engagement in misogynistic, sexist and homophobic practices (see the report for further detail) the university responded differently by instituting a restorative justice approach. As the report details, this response acknowledged the formative societal influences as well as the need for individual accountability (Barkhouse, et al. 2015; Liebenberg, Ungar & Ikeda, 2013).

Bridges & Jensen (2011:134) discuss the reluctance to explore the effects of normalized pornography on people's intimate experiences as

rooted “in a fear of what such inquiry might reveal about the construction of gender/sex and power/violence in a mass-mediated patriarchal society”. This fear may stem from finding that our freedom to define ourselves is a mirage and, metaphorically speaking, we all drink from the same well. Given the rapid emergence of the World Wide Web efforts to mitigate negative influences at the community level are challenging.

Government regulation is a contentious topic that was noted by participants in relation to the purchase of guns. Interview participant Mike expressed his belief that Canada should keep the gun registry while also recognizing the difficult balance of ensuring rights and freedoms with the good of society. Another research participant critiqued the availability of guns particularly in rural areas, as a potential factor that contributed to violence. I agree with interviewee Mike that there is a need to regulate the sale of guns and that this could be one small component of a plan to reduce interpersonal violence.

Mike’s suggestion that government oversight is required to limit potential harms from the sale of guns indicates a watchful and responsible care for citizens is the role of good governance. Other research participants also expressed the need for social policies to encourage a more peaceful society. For example, Sofie expressed her belief that a vital component of a community response to interpersonal violence is ongoing refinement of relevant social policies on media. While it is possible that governments can influence advertising content for example, such change is a daunting task that runs counter to neoliberal mandates that favor corporate interests (Scourfield & Welsh, 2002; Lupton, 2005; Gillingham, 2006; Swadener, 2010;

Chan, 2013; Liebenberg, Ungar & Ikeda, 2013; Mellows, 2013; Haydock, 2014).

Kilbourne (1999) believes there is sufficient research to conclude that greater exposure to advertising equates with a greater influence, even if this is not acknowledged. This conclusion lends support to Sofie's recommendation to consider exercising greater oversight regarding the amount and type of advertising that is permitted, particularly to youth. For example, limiting the frequency of exposure to alcohol advertising to youth may have a positive impact in reducing underage drinking, as discussed in Chapter Six (Jernigan 2011).

I believe that such efforts to regulate advertising can demonstrate ways in which governments and health agencies might collaborate to focus on population health approaches (Babor, et al. 2010).

Interview participant C of the Youth and Schools focus group thought there were ways the media could be used to promote healthy relationships. Aaker & Smith (2010) demonstrate in their book that social media can be a quick, effective and powerful driver of social change.

Interview participant Katie recommended that governments have a responsibility to exercise regulation of corporations that may contribute to violence such as those involved in the creation or sale of "alcohol, guns, violent media and violent pornography". This recommendation is supported by relevant literature that champions regulation as an effective tool in reducing interpersonal violence (Campbell 2007; Braithwaite, 2011). Braithwaite (2011) points out that the idea of responsive regulation began as a theory of business regulation and has developed to include crime,

peacebuilding, and other private and public governance applications. While the notion of regulation may appear to have adversarial overtones, Braithwaite (2011) suggests that partnership with those one intends to regulate is possible and the development of regulations can become collaborative capacity building.

In summary, the data analyzed within this section calls into question the potential of communities to mitigate the negative influences of hypersexualized and violent media, including the marketing of violent video games, the social marketing of alcohol and the sale of guns. It also explored the value of teaching critical reflection skills related to making choices that promote non-violence and healthy relationships within a culture often hostile to these aims. The data implies that communities can influence the social and cultural environment and also teach youth and community members to exercise good judgment. The Municipal Alcohol Project described below highlights efforts at a local community level to do both: increase awareness and education regarding the culture of alcohol and associated harms and define measures communities can take to influence their social and cultural environment.

Theme 6: The Municipal Alcohol Project: Local Meets Global

According to many interview participants, the Municipal Alcohol Project is positioned to influence local decisions that can help to reduce the harms of alcohol and alcohol-related violence and address broader structural and cultural issues. This innovative project was designed to understand and illuminate alcohol-related harms in three Nova Scotia Municipalities:

Bridgewater, Wolfville and Antigonish. This project demonstrated that alcohol consumption is increasing in Nova Scotia and has risen 9.5% over the last 10 years, in part driven by a 65.0 per cent increase in the number of retail outlets selling liquor from fiscal year 2000–2001 to 2008–2009, as noted in Chapter Three and Chapter Six (Beaton, 2011; Stockwell, 2011). In the Town of Bridgewater, located in Lunenburg County, the Municipal Alcohol Project interviewed key informants who said that they believed very few people are unaffected by alcohol (Beaton, 2011: 4). The Municipal Alcohol Project informants reported that the social, criminal and health harms related to alcohol use affect the entire community including the municipality's adult men, women and seniors, and above all, youth (Beaton, 2011). This project helped to break the silence about the negative impacts of alcohol abuse and made connections to other social problems.

Interview participant Elena also spoke about the Municipal Alcohol Project and suggested that it could be a tool to reveal to the community a deeper analysis about what triggers alcohol abuse and the ways in which such abuse is linked to sexual assault. Elena is pointing to an expanded role for the Municipal Alcohol Project that would include an understanding of the links of alcohol abuse to sexual violence to inform a more effective community response. She felt such work may also reveal what aspects of the community contribute to heavy drinking as this may help tailor responses to different communities.

Hari (2015) points to the example of Portugal, which decriminalized drug use ten years ago, as leading a more progressive response to individuals with problematic substance use and/or addiction by helping them

become more connected within their communities. Hari indicates that the opposite of addiction is connection and this is achieved not by the war on drugs or placing people in jail; rather, it is achieved by assisting people to integrate into the community and helping them with housing, employment and the restoration of relationships (ibid). Fifteen years ago, Portugal had one of the worst drug problems in Europe. Today addiction rates have been reduced by 50%. Drugs were decriminalized and more money was put into holistic rehabilitation that provided people with psychosocial skills to help foster healthy relationships. The steps Portugal has taken to build connection and stronger community responses to those experiencing substance abuse and/or addiction points to ways in which municipal alcohol projects could expand to advocate for measures that support greater connection and belonging within their communities.

Police Official (PO), also spoke about an expanded role for the Municipal Alcohol Project that could work towards defining policies that reduce the harms of alcohol, limit exposure of alcohol ads by youth and change the culture of alcohol. As addressed in the previous chapter, emerging research indicates that measures communities take to limit youth exposure to alcohol advertising as this has been demonstrated to be an effective means of reducing youth consumption of alcohol (Snyder et al. 2006; Babor et al. 2010; Jernigan, 2011; Parker & McCaffree, 2013).

Police Official (PO) also spoke about close associations with beer companies. He indicated it was not good practice to name a building after a beer company as it served as an endorsement and subtle promotion of the product. He also recommended careful consideration regarding the location

of new liquor outlets so as not to position them within easy access of schools.

Interview participant Lara indicated her belief that municipal governments could initiate strategies to reduce availability of alcohol by decreasing hours bars are open and limiting the number of liquor. She suggested we have to stop thinking that alcohol is socially acceptable. That alcohol is socially acceptable is not the problem; rather, it is the culture of alcohol that can encourage harmful drinking that exceeds low risk drinking guidelines (Stockwell, 2011).

Individual interviewee Katie also spoke about the potential power of municipal governments to implement alcohol policy measures. She also recommended advocating for alcohol policy on a municipal and provincial level to reduce access to alcohol and alcohol advertising. Katie recommended increasing the price of alcohol that contains higher alcohol content because she believed a higher price may serve to deter youth who often base their purchase on alcohol content. She appeared very knowledgeable about this topic and confident that the measures she was recommending were actionable. These measures are part of a best practice mandate for alcohol policy and reflect an awareness that youth may purchase less expensive alcohol and therefore higher prices for higher alcohol content may help to reduce harm (Babor et al. 2010).

The Municipal Alcohol Project appears to have helped individuals and communities gain a collective sense of agency that was conveyed in the responses of interview participants. Raising the profile of the ways in which alcohol can harm the lives of local individuals—especially youth—can be

understood as an example of giving ‘voice’ and prominence to a social issue that is often silenced. This process may result in innovative responses that engage the community in ways that could create connection and a sense of belonging for individuals who are susceptible to substance abuse and/or addiction. While such work is just beginning, several interview respondents indicated their belief in an expanded role for municipal alcohol projects that would include exploring links between alcohol and violence as well as strategies to prevent violence. The Municipal Alcohol Project serves as an example of the ways in which individuals and communities can attempt to exercise their collective agency in Lunenburg County to promote local change even while influenced by a neoliberal framework and globalized context that helps promote a culture of alcohol (Beaton, 2011).

The remaining theme in this chapter explores peace education and the belief expressed by many interview participant, that such education might lead to a reduction of violence within relationships and communities.

Theme 7: Peace Education: Limitations and Possibilities

Many interview participants spoke about the role of peace education in reducing interpersonal violence. They emphasized the need for schools to teach skills to youth to resolve conflict and to intervene in violent situations. They believed this education could include information regarding bystander effect, non-violent communication and empathy. Participant Elena believed programs could teach students skills to intervene when they experience or witness verbally abusive and/or violent situations. The effectiveness of such programs are slowly beginning to be evaluated (Katz, et al. 2011). For

example, the *Mentors in Violence Prevention* (MVP) initiated in 1993, was one of the first bystander-focused programs in the domestic violence and sexual assault fields (ibid). This program has been widely implemented both in the United States and internationally in sports organizations, college campuses, military bases, and in schools. A study evaluating bystander-focused programs found that although more research is necessary, MVP is "effective in addressing a range of abuses and violence that occurs in the gendered social interpersonal world of adolescents" (Katz et al. 2011: 700).

Interview participant Sal suggested the need to influence the beliefs of children and youth to help them adopt "a belief system of peacefulness". While such beliefs can be influenced by educational opportunities, belief systems are also developed in the context of relational experiences in families and in communities.

Remarkably, six interview participants identified components of peace education programs (see Findings chapter for further detail) despite the interview questions not specifically addressing this topic. Their recommendations are supported by relevant literature that support the inclusion of opportunities to learn non-violent communication and conflict resolution in schools (Katz, 2006; Ichaporia & Lawes 2013). I argue that these components include critical reflection that goes beyond teaching skills to encourage analysis related to the ways social and cultural factors influence violence or contribute to peace. According to Brantmeier (2011: 352), rather than status quo reproduction, critical peace education aims to empower educators as transformative change agents (Freire, 1973) who

critically analyze race, class, gender, ability/disability, religion, sexual orientation as related to oppression, dominance, privilege and marginalization. This process can lead to defining and connecting measures at the local level that can point to transformative peacebuilding (Freire, 1073; Harvey et al. 2007; Brantmeier, 2011).

To complement the teaching of such skills, participant D of the Youth and Schools focus group also suggested that professionals need to incorporate lessons learned from the trauma field. For example, it is possible to imagine that children who have been most traumatized are also among those who are most punished in school settings because of acting-out behaviour that is poorly understood. Kletter et al. (2013) says reactions to trauma are sometimes misdiagnosed as symptoms of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder because kids dealing with adverse experiences may have difficulty in regulating emotions and behavior. Difficulty with self-regulation explains why a lot of these kids get into trouble in and outside the classroom. If this behavior is viewed through a trauma-informed lens responses could encourage the development of self-regulation skills that help children to become calm and peaceful (Brazelton et al. 2003; Siegel, 2012).

Braithewaite (2011) described parents as the first regulators of behavior and in their role as mentors they often require support. Several respondents recommended that communities provide services to teach couples and parents non-violent communication and conflict resolution skills. However, as noted above, teaching these skills and helping people to respond better to stressful situations must be linked to community efforts to reduce stress, trauma and injustice.

Many interviewees, when considering the peace education needs of youth, felt that families, communities and schools needed to provide mentorship in the development of empathy, non-violent communication and conflict resolution skills.

Conclusion

Seven themes highlighted in this chapter represented ideas and measures identified by research participants as helpful to reducing violence and promoting peace in Lunenburg County. The concept of agency was an important consideration in the discussion and analysis of each theme as was acknowledgment of the constraints of oppressive cultural and structural factors (Gill, 2008; McRobbie, 2009; McGibbon, 2012; O'Neill, 2015).

The first theme emphasized the need to end the secrecy that shrouds interpersonal violence. Stigma regarding this issue was linked to feelings of shame victims of violence often experience, particularly victims of sexual assault. When the victim of violence had been intoxicated, it was acknowledged that feelings of shame increased. Stigma, alcohol use and shame all contributed to silence regarding experiences of violence.

The findings suggested that the women interviewed who had been prior victims of interpersonal violence found it personally empowering to share their story. They appreciated that in doing so, they were breaking the silence about violence. They also hoped that joining with others, they could collectively influence change while at the same time expressing fear that the public may not be ready to hear their stories.

The second theme acknowledged the importance of engaging more boys and men to work towards ending interpersonal violence. However, the constraints of popular forms of masculinity were raised as potentially preventing them from intervening to prevent incidents of violence. Recognizing the structural and cultural factors (see Chapters Six and Seven) that create immense pressure for boys and men in Lunenburg County to conform to gender stereotypes, the findings indicated a process discussing and 'unpacking' these messages would help empower boys and men to oppose violence. The findings indicated a perception that hosting conversations to discuss issues related to violence could be challenging; particularly topics related to male privilege and patriarchy. The need for safety was emphasized as an important element of creating spaces where boys and men could speak about their roles of brother, partner, father and community member/leader. The literature indicates that there may be more willingness to engage in such conversations by men and boys than revealed by the findings. This was indicated by the results of the White Ribbon survey which highlighted that 75% of Canadian men feel that it is very important to speak out on issues of violence against women and 66% believed they could personally be doing more (Minerson et al. 2011). This study indicated that boys and men may do more if they know what steps to take.

The third theme presented findings indicating a belief that perpetrators of violence should be treated with compassion. Notably, one male research participant, who acknowledged he had been sexually abused in his childhood by a member of the clergy, recommended treating perpetrators of violence with love. This appeared to stem from his belief that the perpetration of

violence indicated a flawed society and therefore, processes that 'other' individual perpetrators of violence miss this point. Several research participants emphasized the idea that perpetrators of violence were a part of a collective 'us' and should not therefore be shamed and treated with distain as they noted was frequently the case in the media. However, other research participants shared their belief that dangerous offenders should be imprisoned. It was also noted that prisons should have tailored treatment programs for men who abuse women.

The fourth theme related to findings which indicated a strong critique of the current criminal justice system which they felt failed to rehabilitate prisoners. Many participants recommended greater applicability of trauma-informed and restorative justice approaches to cases of interpersonal violence that they believed could teach skills for non-violent relationships. One participant recommended that these approaches be tried, even in cases of sexual assault. A feminist critique found in the literature indicated restorative approaches are not successful in asymmetrical relationships and therefore attention to power and safety of victims must be paramount. It was recommended that such approaches be tried in less severe cases of interpersonal violence if well-resourced.

The fifth theme acknowledged the systemic power of mass marketing, media and advertising to influence a porn, rape, alcohol and violent culture that was evident throughout the findings and is represented in the chart at the beginning of this chapter. When facing the magnitude and power of globalized marketing and social media the ability to influence social change at the community level was questioned. Do we teach youth media literacy

and strengthen their ability to be critical of the messages they receive without taking steps to influence this content? These questions related to the responsibility and/or ability of communities to regulate these influences within a mass-mediated, capitalist society (Orbe, 1998; Kilbourne, 2000; Katz, 2006; Levin & Kilbourne, 2009).

The sixth theme discussed the potential of Municipal Alcohol Projects (MAPS) to address both the harms of alcohol and reduce violence. These projects were acknowledged as helping to break the silence about the pervasiveness of harmful alcohol use, particularly among youth. They offered a local example of ways to resist the influence of global marketing. Several interview participants felt these projects could influence alcohol policy and help change the culture of alcohol.

The seventh and final theme of this chapter focused on peace education in schools and in the provision of specific skill development programs in the community that could teach both youth and adults conflict resolution skills, non-violent communication and empathy. The provision of critical peace education could include ongoing reflection regarding the influence of structural and cultural influences on violence in Lunenburg County. Such analysis could inform policies that aim to reduce violence in communities. While it was acknowledged that education alone is often not effective in influencing behavior change, critical peace education could inspire educators to become transformative change agents.

Taken together, these seven themes represent ideas and measures identified by research participants as important in the development of community peacebuilding plans that aim to reduce violence and promote

peace. The meta-analysis which framed this thesis and the specific focus of this chapter asserted that grassroots community peacebuilding involves defining and connecting measures at the local level that can lead to challenging broad oppressive cultural and structural factors that are linked to the promotion of violence at provincial, national and international levels (Curle, 1971, 1995; Galtung, 1990, 1995; Melander, 2005; Mitchels, 2006; Heathershaw, 2007; Schirch, 2008; Flaherty, 2010; Lederach & Lederach, 2010; Ramsbotham et al. 2011).

Chapter Nine: Conclusion

Introduction

This thesis offers a contribution to the field of peace studies by demonstrating that framing responses to persistent high rates of interpersonal violence as grassroots community-based peacebuilding has transformative possibilities. Specifically, this thesis contributes to learning what local community citizens say about the influences of cultural and structural violence on interpersonal violence and ways communities can respond. The meta-analysis framing this thesis asserts that this grassroots community peacebuilding involves defining and connecting measures at the local level that can lead to defining and challenging broad oppressive cultural and structural factors linked to the persistence of violence at provincial, national and international levels (Curle, 1971, 1995; Galtung, 1990, 1995; Melander, 2005; Mitchels, 2006; Heathershaw, 2007; Schirch, 2008; Flaherty, 2010; Lederach & Lederach, 2010; Ramsbotham et al. 2011). I argue throughout this thesis that many of the cultural and structural factors that influence the lived experiences of citizens in local communities are determined outside the community. These cultural and structural factors are often mediated by globalized structures that are supported by governments influenced by neoliberal values (Alexander, 2008; Gill, 2008; Mellows, 2013; Giroux, 2014; Haydock, 2014). Work at the community level can appear very daunting when confronted by such powerful factors. Consequently, I explore the concept of agency in relation to opportunities for community citizens to define and influence change within their community. Neoliberal and postfeminist theories suggest that agency is exercised by making informed

and healthy individual choices (Gill, 2008; O'Neill, 2015). In other words, the individual is responsible for minimizing personal risk (Scourfield & Welsh, 2002; Lupton, 2005; Gillingham, 2006; Swadener, 2010; Liebenberg, Ungar & Ikeda, 2013). I profiled literature throughout this thesis that critiqued this discourse of risk and individual 'responsibilisation' as obscuring and negating the social reality of oppression in all its forms, including poverty, sexism, racism, ableism, homophobia and transphobia, to name a few. A feminist critique of the discourse of risk and the neoliberal and postfeminist view of agency concluded that this discourse and conceptualization of agency fails to recognize power dynamics and sexual politics (McRobbie, 2009; O'Neill, 2015). While I recognized throughout this thesis that men and women have agency, the existence of cultural and structural oppressive factors were also appreciated as impacting men and women's choices and ability to influence change. It is now well recognized that biologic and genetic endowment, although very important in determining health, are not the major determinants of the health of individuals, families, communities, and nations (McGibbon & McPherson, 2011). Just as the social determinants of health (SDH) play the major role in shaping health outcomes, I argue it is the social environment that is most influential in determining a predisposition to both violence and substance abuse and/or addiction (Alexander, 2008; Gill, 2008; McRobbie, 2009; McGibbon & McPherson, 2011; O'Neill, 2015).

Through analysis of responses of interview participants and a review of relevant literature, I explored the ways in which social and cultural structures promote violence in relationships as well as possibilities for reproducing these structures differently. I also profile the relationship between alcohol and

violence and the importance of recognizing this connection in community peacebuilding. The data yielded rich descriptions of the myriad ways in which cultural and structural violence is experienced in Lunenburg County and is believed to be linked to sustaining high rates of interpersonal violence. Interview responses also suggest measures that could inform a community peacebuilding response.

I argue throughout this thesis that interventions to reduce interpersonal violence must prioritize social justice and the creation of cultures that promote non-violence and peace. This can imply a radical critique of neoliberal mandates that operate ubiquitously and insidiously to normalize cultural practices that are, as indicated by the research data and substantiated by relevant literature, related to direct violence (Curle, 1971,1995 & 1996; Alexander, 2008; Dines, 2010; Nash Parker & McCaffree, 2013). When a spotlight is directed to the cultural and structural factors that influence the field of experiences of individuals in communities, the need to provide environments that promote peace is illuminated (Curle, 1971, 1995 & 1996; Orbe, 1998; Alexander, 2008). It also becomes clear that while individuals are responsible for acts of violence, communities are also responsible for the ways in which they nurture peace or violence. Social problems and factors that are referred to as cultural violence must be acknowledged as contributing to violence.

This thesis also adds to the community peacebuilding literature, which advocates for a sustained feminist and gendered lens to ensure the voices of girls and women are not muted.

As noted in Chapters Two and Three, many researchers (i.e. Curle, 1971, 1995; Boulding, 1977; Lederach, 2003; Mitchels, 2005; Schirch, 2008; Galtung, 2010; Lederach & Lederach, 2010; Ramsbotham et al. 2011) have written about the transformational aspects of peacebuilding that lend themselves to social healing. I argue throughout this thesis that a return to the radical roots of peacebuilding speaks to an emancipatory function through the promotion of environments in which all people can flourish and develop nurturing, positive relationships (Curle, 1995; Mitchels, 2006; Galtung & Webel, 2007; Lederach & Lederach, 2010). Therefore, the focus on interpersonal violence, particularly violence against girls and women, within peace studies requires a focus on the social factors that determine the quality of life and relationships of those within the community.

It also points to measures that could enhance coordinated community responses to interpersonal violence in Lunenburg County within a grassroots peacebuilding framework, the architecture of which is based in Galtung's (1976; 1996; 2010) tripartite assertion that direct violence is linked to cultural and structural violence.

This concluding chapter will briefly review the structure of the thesis, show how chapters build upon each other to support contributions to disciplines noted above, and suggest directions for future research.

The Case Study: Lunenburg County

Chapter Two presents the case study of Lunenburg County, Nova Scotia, Canada, and highlights when a gender lens is applied to citizen's experiences of safety the world appears an unsafe place, particularly for girls and women. Violence against women, the number one human rights violation

in the world, constitutes a global peacelessness that is a significant issue in the province of Nova Scotia and around the globe (Flaherty, 2010).

While quoting rates of violence is an inexact science because so much violence remains hidden, Chapter Two noted that Nova Scotia has been reported to have the highest rates of sexual assault among all provinces in Canada, in addition to high rates of other forms of interpersonal violence (Sexual Assault in Nova Scotia: A Statistical Survey, 2009; Atkinson, 2010; Nova Scotia Domestic Violence Prevention Committee Report, 2009; Family Violence in Canada, A Statistical Profile, 2010). Chapter Two also noted the ways in which structural and cultural violence are experienced by citizens of Lunenburg County. It specifies that women experience poverty more frequently and that the Nova Scotia Child Poverty Report Card (2007) stated that ninety per cent of single-parent families are led by women; twenty-five percent of these women are receiving social assistance. I also noted that the discrepancy in rates of pay for men and women and discrepancies in parenting responsibilities contribute to women's vulnerability and stress and is a form of structural violence that intersects in many ways with experiences of direct violence in Lunenburg County.

Cultural violence, as noted previously, is defined by Galtung (1990) as aspects of culture that can be used to justify or legitimize direct or structural violence. These intersections are sometimes subtle, but are also pervasive. Sexism, hypersexualization, pornography, a culture of alcohol and colonialism are among the factors noted by research participants as contributing to experiences of direct violence. These factors are depicted in Chapters Five and Six. The nature of these connections and relationships

explored through the data analysis and literature review presented in Chapters Three, Six, Seven and Eight will be re-summarised in further sections of this concluding chapter.

I chose Lunenburg County as the case study to focus on my home community, to demonstrate the applicability of a community peacebuilding framework and to profile local wisdom by interviewing individuals living in this county who were engaged in efforts to reduce interpersonal violence.

Literature Review

The literature reviewed in Chapter Three highlights intersections among three bodies of literature: (1) peace studies and conflict resolution, (2) the interpersonal anti-violence field and (3) the substance abuse and addiction field. These intersections are important for larger arguments made in this thesis, namely that violence, substance abuse and high rates of addiction flourish in contexts that promote alienation and disconnection and, as such, are risk factors that support a cyclical relationship; violence sustains violence (Curle, 1999Alexander, 2009). Therefore, efforts to reduce violence are ultimately about the creation of a sense of belonging within communities, positive peace and 'right relationships', efforts that can be described as peacebuilding.

My review of the literature indicates that interpersonal and/or gender-based violence is not a personal or private matter but is socially constructed and therefore influenced by social, political and cultural structures. Chapter Three includes a description of theories of peace studies and conflict resolution and explores connections between relational theory and peacebuilding.

Relevant literature reviewed in Chapter Three supports central claims made in this thesis:

1. Both perpetrators and victims of violence live in socially constructed contexts that are informed by cultural and structural violence that, in turn, contribute to direct violence and substance abuse and/or addiction (Curle, 1999; Alexander, 2008).
2. A focus on gendered dichotomies and the dominant discourses related to perpetrators and victims directs our gaze away from these broader factors to a focus on individual blame and responsibility (Alexander, 2008; Giroux, 2013; Liebenberg, et al 2013).
3. These discourses of responsibilisation direct our gaze away from neoliberalism and the globalization that propels growth of dislocation, alienation, violence and substance abuse and/or addiction (Mate, 2008; Alexander, 2008).
4. The transformative potential of peacebuilding approaches moves our focus from individual responsibility to include a wider analysis of social and cultural violence that compels a collective community response and can be referred to as social healing (Boulding, 1977; Curle, 1991,1999; Mitchels, 2006; Galtung, 2007; Lederach & Lederach, 2010; Thompson & O'dea, 2011).

Foundational concepts explored within the literature review include Galtung's (1996) violence triangle, colonialism, positive peace, the dislocation theory of addiction, the emancipatory potential of grassroots peacebuilding and Lederach's concept of social healing. Social healing is

discussed in relation to trauma-informed approaches, relational theory, peace psychology and restorative approaches.

Methodology and Research Design

I employ a qualitative approach that utilizes both individual and group (focus) interviews as a means of collecting data. Both the focus groups and individual interviews were guided by the same semi-structured interview schedule.

Critical realism informs my ontology and epistemology and is best suited to this research because of its ability to bridge the divide between objectivism and subjectivism, agency and structure, and between the relativism ascribed to post-modernism and the narrow focus of sociological modernism (Houston, 2001). Suited for acknowledging complex issues, the ontology of critical realism perceives the existence of a world independent from our thoughts and what we believe to know about it while also recognizing that our knowledge is only partial and evolving (ibid). When examining factors that contribute to interpersonal violence, it is important to recognize that a complete picture of the issue involves 'embodied' historical assessment of the impact of violence and that 'human agency' can be limited by a social reality and factors beyond an individual's control (O'Neill, 2015).

Influential theories described in Chapter Four include feminist theory and co-cultural theory the latter of which is informed by muted group and standpoint theories (Kramarae, 1981; Stanley & Wise, 1993; Henley & Kramerae, 1994; Samovar & Porter, 1994; Orbe 1998; Harding, 2002; Burnett, et al.; 2009; Bartels, 2012). As discussed in Chapter Four, I applied thematic analysis to the data. The findings are presented in Chapter Five.

Patomaki (2001) asserts within peace studies there is a clear place for critical peace research and argues that Galtung's idea of emancipatory peace research brings peace research into the realm of critical theory (Patomaki 2001). In this thesis this idea is coupled with Stanley and Wise's (1993) admonition to include a reflexivity that involves the feminist researcher recognizing her role as a constructing agent and her equality with those researched, accepting that opinions, beliefs or other constructions of events and persons are a representation of 'reality'. Critical realism holds no preconceived ideas about oppression and recognizes that knowledge is a product of its social context, while considering the effects of objective reality (Houston, 2001). As such, the data analysis presented in Chapters Six, Seven and Eight are regarded as a motivated construction subject to critical feminist analytical inquiry as a part of emancipatory peace research (Stanley & Wise, 1993; Patomaki 2001).

Data Analysis: Summary and Highlights

Chapters Six and Seven explore aspects of structural and cultural violence identified by research participants as contributing to direct violence. The data reveal that while research participants are critical of these factors they also recognize that they participate in and are influenced by them. The tension explored in these chapters and throughout this thesis involved exploring the extent to which individuals in Lunenburg County have agency in influencing and shaping the social contexts in their communities.

In the data analysis presented in Chapters Six and Seven, I interrogate the current cultural and structural factors that interview participants believe are linked to direct violence in Lunenburg County. The scope and breath of

detail found in the data that linked cultural and structural factors to direct violence was unexpected; particularly evident is a strong critique of many cultural factors in Lunenburg County that participants describe as influential throughout their lifespan. These include recognition that the culture of alcohol is pervasive and linked to violence. This observation is substantiated in Chapter Seven by relevant literature (Jernigan, 2011; Stockwell, 2011; Wells, et al, 2013; Parker & McCaffree, 2013). Chapter Seven discusses ways in which the culture of alcohol and pornography are socially constructed and fueled by economic interests that trump social mandates within neoliberal contexts (Chan, 2013; Mellows, 2013; Giroux, 2014 Haydock, 2014).

Chapter Seven also explores the various ways in which advocacy efforts for broad policy measures to limit the harm of alcohol are confronted by barriers within governments influenced by neoliberalism and globalization (Chan, 2013; Mellows, 2013; Haydock, 2014). A discourse of risk also constructs barriers to collective action. Within neoliberal frameworks, the focus is on the individual to act responsibly, drink responsibly, make rational choices and exercise self-discipline, rather than on the regulatory environment in which people act (Haydock, 2014). I emphasize in Chapter Seven that such discourses individualize problems such as sexual assault and alcohol abuse by rendering individuals responsible for minimizing their risks and ensuring their own personal safety (Chan, 2013; Mellows, 2013; Haydock, 2014).

Appreciation of the power of cultural and structural factors to shape and influence behaviour, as noted in Chapters Six and Seven, challenge a limited and constrained understanding of the origins of violence that is often

confined to discourses of individual responsibilisation (Scourfield & Welsh, 2002; Lupton, 2005; Gillingham, 2006; Swadener, 2010; Chan, 2013; Mellows, 2013; Liebenberg, Ungar & Ikeda, 2013; Haydock, 2014). This discourse, buoyed by accompanying feelings of shame, serves to silence individuals. Interview participants and the relevant literature describe shame as a silencer. Shame prevents both victims and perpetrators from seeking help or telling others about their experiences (Pollack,1998; Hartling, et al. 2000; Barker, 2003; Fessler, 2004; Zehr, 2008; Gilligan, 2009; Lederach & Lederach 2011; Brown, 2012; Shepard & Rabinowitz, 2013).

In various literatures, shame is acknowledged as both negative and positive. Shame, when used discriminately, is found to have positive attributes that may include a reintegrative element that is essential to restorative justice practices (Braithwaite, 1989; Retzinger & Scheff, 2000).

Interview participants also spoke about the pervasive influences of colonialism that they feel trickle down to influence attitudes and behaviors within relationships. Colonialism is also linked to pervasive feelings of shame and violence and these connections are corroborated by relevant literature (Jiwani, 2002; Tuhiwai Smith, 2002; Vecchio & Lockard, 2004; Battiste, 2015 & Blackstock, 2015). The literature reviewed here suggests an overarching colonial structure supported by sexism, racism, classism, homophobia and other oppressive social patterns that negatively impact all of society.

Data analysis in Chapter Six is based on claims made by interview participants that the pervasive use and influence of the internet, which includes various forms of hypersexualized social media, violent pornography and violent video games, is linked to direct violence (Kilbourne, 2000;

O'Toole, 2000; Anderson, et al. 2003; Katz, 2006; Murray, 2008; Ybarra, et al. 2008; Strasburger, 2009; Struthers 2009; Dines 2010; Levin & Kilbourne, 2010; Bridges & Jensen, 2011). As interview participants noted, socialization processes begin at birth and are central to one's emerging self-concept and communication patterns (Orbe,1998). The impact of violent pornography (that is considered mainstream) on adolescent development may be under-estimated. According to Dines (2010) research, pornography negatively influences the sexual template of developing adolescent boys and girls in a way that limits their ability to sustain a healthy relationship. As described in Chapter Six, Dines (2010) also outlines the ways in which pornography is linked to violence against women, particularly 'gonzo' porn, the most common form of pornography accessed on the internet.

The theme of agency was discussed in Chapter's Six, Seven and Eight in relation to limiting the negative impact of large, globalized businesses that market pornography and alcohol, for example.

Both the data and relevant literature suggest that structural factors are influential in determining cultural values. For example, the marketing of alcohol to children and youth would suggest that globalized structural interests contribute to forming what has been described in Nova Scotia as the culture of alcohol (Nova Scotia Department of Health Promotion and Protection, 2007). Similarly, the proliferation of online pornography has been influential in shaping what has been referred to as a 'porn culture' in Nova Scotia (Dines, 2010; Martell, 2014).

While data analysis presented in Chapters Six and Seven focuses on cultural and structural factors linked to direct experiences of violence,

analysis in Chapter Eight moves to explore community measures and factors identified as necessary to reduce violence.

Chapter Eight profiles themes related to community responses to violence and focuses on change within systems, with emphasis on the school and justice systems. The data also highlights the need to engage with various levels of government, with specific strategies to target municipal levels. At a deeper level, the data also indicates a desire of many of those interviewed to foster new cultural and structural practices that promote and nurture more caring and peaceful relationships. While the data indicate that respondents felt creating social change is an enormous task, and some pessimism about whether such change is possible, it also includes specific recommendations to facilitate change, such as a focus on social responsibility and community values, changing the culture of alcohol, decolonization, peace education, engagement of boys and men, changing porn and rape culture and increased availability of restorative approaches.

A central claim of the thesis asserts critical analysis of social, economic and cultural environments that comprise the field of experience for individuals within communities is pivotal in influencing violence or peace. This view acknowledges the importance of personal responsibility while highlighting public accountability as depicted in the chart (circle) in Chapter Eight (Moffat, 1999; Mellows, 2013; Haydock, 2014).

A community peacebuilding perspective suggests that if we want people to act non-violently we must create a social ecology that encourages peace and discourages violence.

Many interview participants believe that relatively few individuals need to be removed from society and emphasized a need for justice systems to become trauma-informed, implying recognition that violence is often cyclical and that many perpetrators of violence have also been victims (Fallot & Harris, 2012).

The interviewees championed restorative justice approaches as useful in helping to restore damaged relationships. As noted in the literature, many couples who experience violence in their relationships choose to remain together. While some researchers within the justice field suggest restorative processes could offer an opportunity to learn conflict resolution and non-violent communication skills, others recommend these processes be approached with caution (Rubin, 2003; Gabbay, 2005; Stubbs, 2007; Clute, 2010; Llewellyn, 2010; DeFreitas, 2013). However, both Stubbs (2007) and Coker (2005) argue that while restorative approaches need to be adapted to prioritize women's safety, there could be an expanded role for restorative approaches in response to interpersonal violence.

Recommendations for Further Research

I recommend further research to explore the ways in which parents, educators and communities can create opportunities to discuss topics related to colonization, violent media, hypersexualization and porn and rape and alcohol culture. Such discussions would acknowledge the influence of globalized capitalism as well as individual and community agency to resist influences that normalize violence.

Linked to this first recommendation, I also suggest further research regarding effective teaching of peace education in schools, colleges and

universities that includes a critical component to examine the ways that structural and cultural factors influence the lived experience of students to contribute to violence or peace in their relationships. I recommend that this research consider these influences on children and how these topics may be approached beginning in elementary school.

I recommend further research that examines the utility and benefits of restorative approaches in responding to incidents of interpersonal violence and as a social healing paradigm.

I recommend further research related to the ways both perpetrators and victims of violence are portrayed in the media that serve to 'other' both.

Further research is recommended to both acknowledge and reduce the link between the culture of alcohol and interpersonal violence that includes sexual assault.

Braithwaite (2011) points out that the idea of responsive regulation began as a theory of business regulation and has developed to include crime, peacebuilding and other private and public governance applications. While the notion of regulation may appear to have adversarial overtones, Braithwaite (2011) suggests that partnership with those one intends to regulate is possible and the development of regulations can become collaborative capacity building. An expansion of partnerships between alcohol corporations and municipalities and/or public health agencies could serve as such an example. I recommend further research that acknowledges the possibility of such partnerships to explore ways to work together to reduce the harms of alcohol and violence.

Finally, during the course of my research I have noted that Peace Studies appears to have neglected an exploration of the ways in which individual agency can be encouraged to re-imagine and co-construct different cultural and structural practices that promote peace. I recommend further focus on this issue within a peacebuilding framework.

Conclusion

The goal of a transformative grassroots community peacebuilding approach is to provide a social ecology in which individuals can flourish, rise to their full potential and develop relationships that are non-violent. I argue that such contexts can only be co-created by a collective agency moored by a belief that such transformation is possible.

When a peacebuilding framework is applied to the issue of interpersonal violence, and particularly violence against women in Lunenburg County, it raises this violence from the sphere of the private to the public, from the personal to the political. If violence is a social and political problem that is socially constructed through individual participation in these structures, then it is possible, in theory, to construct different cultural and structural institutions and cultural practices that promote peace. However, as implied by critical realist ontology, individual agency is challenged and barriers to change exist within a real world influenced by capitalism, globalization and neoliberalism. Entrenched social structures and financial mandates often present barriers to community's prioritizing a social justice and peace agenda.

A grassroots community peacebuilding framework applied to interpersonal violence in Lunenburg County, requires critical reflection and

analysis. It suggests that the lived experiences of community citizens are linked to large, global structures that are supported by neoliberal frameworks. Therefore, peacebuilding implies resistance to globalization trends that result in dislocation and alienation. This resistance is necessary to co-create cultures in communities that limit harmful influences linked to violence. Radical peacebuilding suggests that citizens can define community measures that resist globalized processes.

In this thesis, I explore the transformative possibilities of grassroots community-based peacebuilding by conducting research framed by Galtung's (1976; 1996; 2010) analytic triangle of violence and informed by Curle's (1971, 1995) and Lederach & Lederach's (2010) understanding of peacebuilding as founded on relationships within the local community (Llewellyn, 2012). Curle (1971, 1995) and Lederach & Lederach (2010) speak about peace as promoting social healing and having an emancipatory potential for all community citizens. This peace is grassroots and relational, focusing on the well-being of local citizens within local communities (Llewellyn, 2012).

This peacebuilding approach is bottom-up and informed by local community members. Positive peace, as defined by Galtung (1996), is about the restoration of relationships, the creation of social systems that serve the needs of the whole population and the constructive resolution of violence. This thesis adds to these ideas by offering the insights of research participants, relevant literature and my personal and professional experiences that contributed to the analysis of this researcher to critically

reflect upon the factors that influence the day to day lives of citizens in Lunenburg County in ways that support either peace or violence.

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Appendix 1

Research Project Information Sheet: Peace-building: Community

Responses to Men's Violence Against Women in Lunenburg County, Nova

Scotia, Canada

Hello,
I am writing to request your participation in a research project. My name is Nancy Ross and I am a doctoral student in the School of Social and International Studies, Peace Division at the University of Bradford, UK. I receive direct supervision from Dr. Graeme Chesters and Dr. Jenny Pearce, Bradford, UK. Their contact information is included below. I live in Lunenburg, NS, Canada and I am conducting my doctoral research project focusing on interviewing participants of 'Be the Peace' project and other key stakeholders who work towards reducing violence against women and girls in Lunenburg County. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with information that you will need to understand this research project and to decide whether you want to participate by agreeing to be interviewed individually or in a focus group. Participation is completely voluntary and your responses will be anonymous and confidential unless otherwise specified. If you have further questions about the purpose of this research and the nature of your participation please do not hesitate to contact me by either the phone number or email address provided below. If you do choose to contact me our conversation will be kept n confidential. All interviews will last up to one hour or one and one half hours in duration. Between the dates of May-December 2014 I will be conducting individual interviews and focus groups to explore your stories, experiences and thoughts of what has been effective in addressing this issue and to learn what future steps you feel are needed to reduce the incidence of interpersonal violence, including sexual assault, in the communities of Lunenburg County. The questions in the interview will be guided by theories from peace studies that suggest that people can experience violence in structural and cultural forms as well as being directly physically harmed. My research focuses on citizen engagement and the need to develop community responses to create opportunities for 'safety, belonging and voice' for all community members. This research project is framed as a grassroots, 'bottom-up' community peace-building project. As such, my dissertation explicitly engages local community voices. However, due to limited resources it is not possible to acknowledge and interview all individuals who are working on this issue.

If English is not your first language or if you are hearing impaired and you choose to share this information, ever effort will be made to provide translation services on your request.

It is possible that the questions explored in the focus groups or in individual interviews could result in discomfort or trigger memories. The researcher will be available following the interview or focus group for a period of debriefing should this be warranted. If you would like further support, Addiction and

Mental Health Services can be contacted should you require further debriefing and or counseling services at 543-5400. In addition to this service, Sally Hutchinson, support worker at the Second Story Women's Center (Phone 902.543.1315 or 902.640.3044) has agreed to meet with anyone who may require support or further opportunities to debrief.

Purpose of Research: The purpose of the research is to explore ways in which our communities can better respond to all forms of interpersonal violence. The research will be used to complete my Ph. D. dissertation and may also form the basis for published articles, conferences or a book. University guidelines and ethical procedures will be followed and each person who agrees to an interview will be asked to sign an informed consent form. The completed dissertation becomes a public document freely distributed and accessible. A copy will be donated to the local library. Public presentations may be made to the community and other avenues of public dissemination will be explored. The intellectual property of the dissertation itself rests with the student researcher, as per the Ph.D. regulations of Bradford University.

Thank you for your consideration of this request,

Sincerely, Nancy Ross

Name of Ph.D. Student Researcher: Nancy Ross
Division of Peace Studies, School of Social and International Studies,
University of Bradford, Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD7 1DP, UK.
Contact Information: Tel: (902) 634-3385 Email: nancy.ross@dal.ca

Research Supervisors: Dr. Graeme Chesters, Deputy Director of the International Centre for Participation Studies, Senior Research Fellow in Peace Studies Email: g.s.chesters@bradford.ac.uk Tel: +44 (0) 1274 234802 and Dr. Jenny Pearce, Professor of Latin American Politics, Director of International Centre for Participation Studies email: j.v.pearce@bradford.ac.uk Tel: +44 (0)1274 23 4183.

Appendix 2

Research Project: Peace-building: Community Responses to Men's Violence Against Women in Lunenburg County, Nova Scotia, Canada

Informed Consent Form

Conditions of Participation
I understand that participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I can withdraw at any time during the interview process and for a period of three months following the interview without giving a reason for my withdrawal. I am free to ask any questions at any time and I am also free to refuse to answer any question at any time. I understand that my participation in this project will involve an individual interview or participation in a focus group that will require up to one hour or one and one half hours of my time. I understand that I may be quoted in the materials that are produced from this study. All quotations will be used on an anonymous basis and with adequate provision to disguise my identity, unless I have been consulted and agree to have a specific quote used with my name identified.
Anonymity and Confidentiality
It is sometimes challenging to conceal identities completely in a rural community. Therefore this research has been designed to maximize confidentiality and anonymity. It is important that all focus group participants maintain confidentiality by not repeating what has been shared.

With your permission, I will be taking hand-written notes rather than audio and/or visual recording of the interviews. These written notes can be shared with you immediately following the interview as an opportunity to suggest edits and/or further clarification. During the interview you will be asked to agree to a pseudonym as a self-chosen identifier that you can easily remember. This will serve as an identifier on each transcript. These steps will both address the priority of ensuring confidentiality and permit a method of identifying each transcript for future reference should you wish to withdraw, be quoted or amend what you have said. Aside from noting your gender information that may hold other identifying factors such as age, ethnicity, sexuality, family make up will not be recorded or quoted. Once the notes from the interviews are transcribed they will be shredded. The interview transcriptions will be stored in both a password memory stick, which is a removable flash memory card, and on a password protected document file on my laptop. Upon your request copies of transcribed interviews can be either emailed or mailed to you to allow for any further clarification and/or alterations and deletions.

If you agree to participate, your ideas and experience will contribute to on going efforts to reduce the incidence of relationship violence, including sexual assault, in Lunenburg County and elsewhere.

_____ (Name) consent to participate in the study conducted by Nancy Ross, School of Social and International Studies,

Bradford University(email: nancy.ross@dal.ca) with the supervision of Dr. Graeme Chesters (email: g.s.chesters@bradford.ac.uk) and Dr. Jenny Pearce (email: j.v.pearce@bradford.ac.uk).

Signed: Date:

_____

Mailing Address

_____

_____

E-mail Address:

Phone

_____

_____

Appendix 3

Semi-Structured Interview Questionnaire

1. Can you tell me a story about what your hopes were when you became a participant of the 'Be the Peace Make a Change' project? and/or B) Can you share a highlight of your involvement with this issue?

2. How can individual citizens take responsibility for ending interpersonal violence?

3. Can you share with me your thoughts or a story about the influence of our culture on violence?

4. What societal structural changes do you think are needed to end violence?

5. How would you address the role alcohol plays in interpersonal violence?

6. If we know that many men who commit violence have also been victims of violence how should this influence how we respond to them?

7. The most common form of couple violence is described as 'situational'. How should a community respond to this form of violence?

8. Can you describe an activity or an image, a symbol or work of art that challenged you to become more peaceful?

9. Please share any additional comments.

Appendix 4

(Song Lyrics, written in response to Rehtaeh Parson's experiences)

Title: *Who Taught Those Boys*

Chorus

Who taught those boys, they could act like that?
Did they learn it at home, or on the Internet?
Did they see it at school, or in shows on TV?
Did they see it in you and in me?

There are bosses and bullies, running the race
Teachers and parents to keep them in place
They burn with rebellion, but all that they learn
Is how to wield power, when they get their turn

Do they know that it's hateful, do they know that it's cruel
To treat someone else as a thing, as a tool
If they don't understand, they will do it again
And from angry, lost boys will grow violent men

Chorus

Women have less power; it's plain to see everywhere
Look no further than our makeup and waxed body hair
To see the culture of women and of our bodies is shame
And willing or not, we are saddled with blame

Chorus
Who teaches girls they should feel like that?
Do they learn it at home or on the internet?
Do they see it at school, or in shows on TV?
Do they see it in you and in me?

We have to try harder, if we want things to change
Need to talk with each other, need to rearrange
All the structures and habits of hierarchy
And where else to start but with you and with me?

So the very next time I hear sexism speak
I won't hesitate, I'll just rise to my feet
And say "That kind of thinking, kills women and girls,
By teaching our kids how to be in the world

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4v7h63IEJsc&list=PL6E500450B6FAED8C&feature=share